WHAT NEXT FOR LABOR? *By the Editors*

NEW MASSES

George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Dean of Canterbury, Lord Ponsonby, S. O. Davies, M.P., Sir Richard Acland, M.P., H. W. Nevinson on

FREEDOM *of the* PRESS *in* BRITAIN

INTELLECTUALS *Under Fire* by Samuel Sillen

MONOPOLY *Takes a Screen Test* By Joy Davidman

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A "NEW ORDER" IN BRITAIN?

R. Palme Dutt, brilliant editor of the Labor Monthly and a great Marxist writer, will answer this question and many others in next week's New Masses. He will discuss:

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Who's Who

JACK YOUNG is a West Coast newspaperman. . . . Blaine Owen is a free lance writer who fought in Spain. . . . Beth McHenry has contributed to NM before. . . . Bradley Rogers is a student of Indian affairs and is now working on a book about that country. . . . Joy Davidman's poems and reviews have frequently appeared in NM.

Flashbacks

TEN militant trade unionists were hanged at Mauch Chunk, Pa., June 21, 1877. These men, all Molly Maguires, were convicted of murder. Their real crime was summarized by an operators' organ, the *Miner's Journal,* on the following day: "Whenever the prices of labor did not suit them, they [the Molly Maguires] organized and proclaimed a strike." . . . In Chicago during the week of June 27, 1893, Governor Altgeld made another notable contribution to labor's progress. He freed Fielden, Neebe, and Schwab, who had been sentenced for life in connection with the Haymarket explosion, saying: "None of the defendants could be at all connected with the case. The jury was picked. Wholesale bribery and intimidation of witnesses was resorted to." . . . A year later, June 26, 1894, Chicagoans were once more near the center of labor's stage: the American Railway Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, began the great Pullman strike. . . . The International Labor Defense was organized June 27, 1925, at Chicago. . . . After years of pressure from trade unionists the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics was established June 27, 1884. . . . The IWW was founded in Chicago, June 27, 1905. . . . Long before Chamberlain began pulling Hitler's chestnuts out of the fire, the British Lion catspawed for continental tyrants. On June 29, 1881, Johan Most, anarchist, was sentenced in England for libeling the Russian czar.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXIX, No. 14

June 24, 1941

What Next for Labor? *An editorial* 3

Freedom of the Press in Britain *A symposium* 5

The Intellectual under Fire *by Samuel Sillen* 8

They Are Still Fighting *by Alvah Bessie* 12

The AEF Lands in California *by Jack Young* 13

Gropper's Cartoon 15

Ralph Graves: Alabama Hero *by Blaine Owen* . . . 16

Trona in the Desert *by Beth McHenry* 19

Editorial Comment 20

Readers' Forum 23

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Tragedy of India *by Bradley Rogers* 24

Brief Review 27

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Monopoly Takes a Screen Test *by Joy Davidman* . . . 28

Artwork by John Atkin, Blashko, Jamison, Michaels, Gulliver.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXIX JUNE 24 NUMBER 14

WHAT NEXT FOR LABOR?

The real reasons behind the President's use of troops against strikers. Old tricks with new performers. The greatest tests are yet to come. An editorial.

AT LAST the king's nakedness has been proclaimed. Steel bayonets have spoken, and their candor leaves nothing to the imagination. For the troops that marched into Inglewood, Cal., to break the strike at the North American aircraft plant trampled underfoot not only the rights of labor, but the great Roosevelt myth. Countless Americans felt that cold steel in their flesh. In the homes of ordinary folk there was wonder and dismay. Union men recalled what John L. Lewis had said of Roosevelt during the election campaign. The "friend of labor" in the White House stood revealed in all his union-busting majesty. And to millions it was brought home that Bunker Hill was in truth, as the President had said, "several thousand miles from Boston, Mass.," that the first fruit of the declaration of an unlimited emergency to prepare for "shooting war" abroad was the use of troops against democracy at home.

In 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt was carried into office on the great wave of revulsion that swept the country when Hoover sent the federal troops against the bonus marchers. Nine years later Franklin Delano Roosevelt himself ordered out the army against striking workers. Those two acts of violence are the landmarks of two eras in American life. They mark the ascending levels of the advance to fascism, the evolution from economic crisis to war crisis, bringing to a head all the ruthlessness and barbarism of a system approaching its doom. The sending of troops and the other repressive measures that accompanied it—the "work or fight" order issued by the Selective Service administration, the "work or starve" amendment by which the House virtually enacted compulsory arbitration, the strikebreaking plant-seizure bill voted by the Senate, the threat to institute a blacklist against all militant workers—are not mere additions to the arsenal of coercion in an effort to enforce "unity" for war. They constitute a turning point, a decisive break with the Roosevelt past, with the policy of liberal capitalism which characterized (despite frequent retreats) the period from 1933 to 1939, and a sharp shift toward a policy of all-out reaction. The momentous character of these events is appreciated even by the commercial press. Wrote the *Wall Street Journal* of June 10:

> The President, in issuing his executive order for the army to take over and operate the North American aviation plant, gave the first clear sign that the administration is embarking on a strong-fisted policy for handling labor problems as they arise in the defense program. It definitely marked an end to the laissez-faire policy which had been in effect through the first year of the national defense program and under which the federal government as a whole had been avoiding any situation where direct action against labor might have to be taken.

Writing from Washington in the New York *Post* of June 10, Edward P. Flynn and Frank Ryhlick declared that the government's latest anti-labor moves "were not isolated actions or actions related only to a single crisis. They were part of a pattern set by President Roosevelt's enunciation of a militant foreign policy in his speech of two weeks ago." This, incidentally, gives the lie to those who seek to place the blame for these repressive measures on the strike leadership at the North American plant. Flynn and Ryhlick added significantly: "The opinion now is that President Roosevelt, by his speech and by his handling of the aircraft strike, is irrevocably embarked on a course he must follow to an end."

It is important for the American people to understand what that course is and where it ends. "It is ironical," wrote Arthur Krock in the June 11 issue of the New York *Times,* "that the most pro-labor President in American history should have been forced to such measures." The irony that Krock speaks of is for the people decidedly on the grim side.

The enemies of labor and the mercenary press have been shrieking that this strike was "Communist inspired," that it was part of an "international revolutionary conspiracy" (Dorothy Thompson), that its purpose was "to promote the Third International and its program of world Communist revolution" (New York *Post),* that, in fact, it "more nearly resembled an insurrection than a labor strike" (Attorney General Jackson). So shrieked reaction at the early efforts of the American workers to organize in the days when a trade union was regarded by the courts as a "conspiracy." The same cry split the heavens in the great railroad strike of 1877 and again in the eighties, when to demand an eight-hour day was tantamount to "Communism" and "revolution." Czar Nicholas of Russia and the Fuehrer of the Third Reich have similarly greeted every effort of working people to secure better conditions. And only a few weeks ago the chief of Henry Ford's Gestapo, Harry Bennett, did his smearing of the CIO with the same red paint. Which only emphasizes the depths to which ex-liberal publications like *PM,* the *Nation,* and the *New Republic* have sunk when they dutifully parrot these crude plagiarisms of Ford and Nazi propaganda.

The charge of Communism rests on no firmer foundation than the fabrications of the Dies committee. But even if there were Communists among the leaders of this strike or any other, what of it? Do those who give such fervent lip-service to democracy propose that only Republicans and Democrats shall have the right to be elected union officials? And what is to be done with those Republicans and Democrats—there are millions of them—who agree with the Communists in opposing American participation in the imperialist war? These questions are not rhetorical; there have been actual situations in which Republicans and Democrats have been victimized as "Reds" merely because their actions or beliefs were frowned upon by those in power.

The aims of the North American strike were, however, far more temperate than the imaginations of the comfortable ladies and gentlemen who fumed against it. There was nothing secret about those aims. They were chanted on the picket line, published in the press, placed before the National Defense Mediation Board. This was a "revolutionary conspiracy" to overthrow a minimum wage of fifty cents an hour, an "insurrection" for a seventy-five cent minimum—less than that paid at government-owned plants—and for a flat ten cents an hour increase. The crime of the strike leaders was not that they took orders from Moscow—which they didn't (nor were there such orders)—but that they refused to take orders from Washington and Wall Street. Their orders came solely from the rank and file. And what the Red-baiters and apologists for force and violence take pains to conceal is that *this was a strike for purely economic demands.* As such it was no different from hundreds of similar strikes both before and after the outbreak of the European war. Any difference that existed in this situation was introduced by the government. It backed up with bayonets the company's refusal to grant concessions. It placed the profits of big business above the food of American men, women, and children, above the rights of labor. This is the first, most elementary meaning of President Roosevelt's strikebreaking.

But there is a deeper meaning. Were the administration primarily concerned with preventing a breakdown in production, it would have brought pressure to bear on those responsible: the company and its master, General Motors. But even where employers have refused to accept decisions of the mediation

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board, there has been no government action against them. For weeks the southern coal operators forced a continuation of a strike in a vital war industry by rejecting a board ruling. Were any troops sent against them? were they denounced as subversive agents? At this very moment in Trona, Cal., the American Potash and Chemical Corp.—which has Nazi connections—defies with impunity a mediation board settlement, thus prolonging a strike of the Alkaline Salt Workers Union 414 which has been in progress over three months. This has compelled the OPM to declare priorities for potash and boric acid. What the administration really wanted in the North American strike was by a display of force to crush the movement for higher wages spreading throughout the country in response to rising living costs and flagrant profiteering. By this act it hoped that the striking aluminum workers in Cleveland, the loggers in the Northwest, and the shipyard machinists in San Francisco would be cowed into submission. By a resort to fascist tactics the administration was warning the railroad workers not to press too hard for their wage demands; it was serving notice on workers everywhere that from now on they must accept what the government and the employers choose to give them.

There was also another major consideration. The White House and its retinue of servile labor leaders wanted to use the North American episode as a pretext to isolate the progressives and drive them out of the labor movement in order to castrate the working class, to break its fighting spirit, and thus deprive the American people of leadership in the struggle against war and Hitlerism at home and abroad. The administration knew this was a dangerous game, but it was playing for big stakes. Because there were involved in this strike a relatively small number of men, most of whom were new to unionism, the Washington strategists felt they could do in this situation what they had not dared in the coal and Ford strikes. The stop-thief device of crying "Communism" and the loyal assistance of Sidney Hillman, Richard Frankensteen, and other White House sycophants were counted on to make even such shocking acts of Nazism as the sending of troops against strikers and the "work or fight" order seem like high-minded patriotism. And it was hoped that the CIO leadership itself would be stampeded into launching a general assault on the most progressive elements in its unions. Thus, it was the administration, and not the local strike committee of the North American strike, that sought ulterior ends.

AS a strikebreaking measure the use of the troops was a success. But from the standpoint of the larger and weightier objectives of big business and the government, it is already evident that the crackdown policy has boomeranged. So swift and unmistakable was the reaction that the threat to send the army against another strike, that at the Aluminum Corp. of America plant in Cleveland, was never carried out; on the contrary, the mediation board negotiated with the union representatives while the strike was in progress and a settlement satisfactory to the workers was arranged. In San Francisco both AFL and CIO strikers replied to an order to return to work, issued by the executive board of the International Association of Machinists, by voting to continue their seven weeks' old strike. From trade unions throughout the country protests against the use of troops began pouring in on the White House and on the office of CIO President Philip Murray, who had at first condemned the North American strike. Murray gave official expression to the overwhelming sentiment of the rank and file by issuing a letter to all CIO unions denouncing the army's strikebreaking and urging a fight to defend labor's rights against all repressive measures—though he weakened his stand by a Red-baiting paragraph lumping Communists with their opposites: corporate, Nazi, and fascist subversive groups. Labor's Non-Partisan League, of which John L. Lewis is chairman, lashed out at the "tidal wave of reaction" and declared: "Responsibility for the wholesale sacrifice of fundamental principles of government labor policy must be pinned squarely on the Roosevelt administration."

The President knew he was risking much by employing federal troops against strikers—the first time this has been done since Cleveland broke the Pullman strike in 1894. The President's hold on the public and his hope of seducing them into accepting a reactionary war rest largely on his alleged sympathy with labor and his identification with the struggles of the people in the days when he saw the principal threat of fascism in the activities of economic royalists like Knudsen and Stettinius. His dilemma has consisted in the fact that his war program is incompatible with the liberal policies that originally won him popular support, yet without this popular support it is difficult, if not impossible, to carry through the war program. Ever since the outbreak of the European conflict he has maneuvered to maintain the illusion that this was still the old Roosevelt, that it was possible to advance toward war without retreating from social reform. In place of the drastic frontal assault on living standards, the labor movement, and civil liberties urged by the most truculent big business groups, he sought to use flank attacks to achieve the same end. As against the Smith amendments to the National Labor Relations Act, the administration sponsored the Norton proposals; for the anti-strike Vinson bill it substituted the more refined strikebreaking of the mediation board. Such tactics enabled Roosevelt to pose as a "lesser evil" in the contest with Willkie and to conceal from a majority of the people the fact that the "more moderate" measures which he and his lieutenants put into practice were leading to essentially the same results as those proposed by the rabid reactionaries. Moreover, it was these selfsame "moderate" measures that were preparing the way for the transformation of the flanking tactics into the head-on frontal assault. For as the war crisis grew more acute and the class struggle within the country rose, the area in which the administration could maneuver steadily narrowed.

President Roosevelt's attempt to resolve the dilemma in the traditional fascist pattern has struck a heavy blow at the illusions built up around him and at the whole philosophy of the "lesser evil." Again, as in Germany in 1932, when the Social-Democratic leaders urged voting for Hindenburg to prevent the election of Hitler; as in Austria in 1933-34, when the Social Democrats collaborated with Dollfuss to forestall Hitler, and as in England in 1941, when they similarly work with Churchill, it is being proved that the consequence of supporting the "lesser evil" is the triumph of the greater. And those sincere persons who thought it possible to join with the devil—big business—on the war question, and still be with the angels on domestic issues now can see where that fallacy has led them. It would be a mistake, of course, to assume that at one stroke the President's influence has been destroyed. The people learn the lessons of history only by experiencing them on their own flesh. They will have to live much, suffer defeats, as well as win victories before they find the path to their ultimate liberation. But the brutal display at Inglewood has given a tremendous impetus to that development which NEW MASSES foresaw when it wrote in its Nov. 19, 1940, issue concerning the election results: "The narrowed Roosevelt plurality shows that the process of popular disillusionment with the President has already begun. The class struggle cannot be exorcised with incantations. As it unfolds in the coming months, FDR's betrayal of the people's mandate will become clearer to millions."

This is not an automatic process, nor will it be brought about solely through self-exposure. Certainly, there is harsh truth in Labor's Non-Partisan League's characterization of the week that opened with the march of the troops into Inglewood as "the blackest in American labor history." And there is no doubt that unless the events of that week can be reversed, "it is clear that American democracy will soon become just another museum piece to be set on a shelf beside the former democracies of the Old World."

But this blackest week is also in some respects one of the brightest. American labor has met the first direct assault of the forces of fascism, and has not only weathered the blow, but has forced the enemy to give ground. This is an achievement to hearten all those who stand against the darkness moving upon our land. It is a token that the spirit that built the CIO, the spirit of the great labor struggles of the past—from the seventies to the Ford strike—burns in undiminished power. The crisis is not over; the greatest tests are yet to come. Now, more clearly than ever, the fight for the people's bread-and-butter and the fight for peace are joined. We need to stand together, to become the rock on which that black wave of the future shall break.

THE EDITORS.

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FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN BRITAIN

We disagree with Churchill's ban on the London "Daily Worker," write George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, the Dean of Canterbury, and other prominent figures. Their points of view. Lessons for America.

When, several months ago, the Churchill government suppressed the London "Daily Worker" and that well known British newsletter on foreign affairs edited by Claude Cockburn, "The Week," widest areas of the British populace were disturbed. That disturbance has grown to a point where, as we recorded last week, a convention was held representing 2,000,000 Englishmen, members of 684 organizations, who demanded freedom of the press and truth from the government about the war. New Masses has just received the expressions of protest by some outstanding Britishers, published in R. Palme Dutt's "Labor Monthly." We feel their remarks have considerable bearing upon the American scene, where a Red-hunt of unprecedented proportions is being sponsored by the government and backed by such hysterical publicists as Dorothy Thompson who called for suppression of the New York "Daily Worker" and the New Masses last week.

Mr. Dutt observes in his preface to the symposium that many of the contributors expressed certain criticism of the Communist Party and Communist policy, "even while admitting that they had not read any statement of Communist policy." He hoped that they would in time acquaint themselves with that party's policy at first hand, and that their misconceptions would be cleared up. Mr. Dutt felt, however, that such misunderstanding was not the "main, immediate issue." The important thing is that they do unite in opposing "the suppression of the only independent, non-governmental, working-class and democratic newspaper."

For, as Mr. Dutt says further, only unity of all democratic-minded people, whatever their political differences, can save the freedom of the press from the drive of reaction. Unless this is clearly understood, he observes, then all criticism of authority will be obliterated.

—THE EDITORS.

The Dean of Canterbury

"Your freedom is in danger; defend it with all your might."

Government Posters.

THIS, we are told, is a war for liberty and freedom. It is only fascism that suppresses public opinion and regiments and dragoons the minds of men.

This attack upon the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* is no new thing. It is only a more subtle and insidious method of what Duff Cooper attempted last year with his "silent column," his prosecutions, his attempted suppression of the press, for which he sought to substitute the *British Gazette*. It is the first step toward fascism. Will it be the last?

The signs are ominous. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial* have already been warned for daring to demand that Chamberlain and Halifax should go. When the time is ripe, and unless we call a halt, other papers will follow the *Daily Worker*.

There was no case for suppression. If the *Daily Worker* was guilty of crime it could have been brought within the process of the law. The government possesses ample powers for any prosecution. Why were they not used? Of what was the government afraid? Did they fear that the *Daily Worker* might be acquitted?

This reversion to executive action, instead of legal process, is a reversion to Star Chamber methods, which involved a fierce fight before their defeat 300 years ago. The fight is on again.

But let us probe deeper. Of what was the government really afraid? That the *Daily Worker* did not tell the truth or only told it partially? If that were so they had no cause to fear, since in a free country lies cannot win: they will in fact defeat the end they serve. Only the truth can make men free; falsehood is powerless against the truth. The government has channels to counter any lie.

Quite the reverse. The government was obviously afraid of certain truths being told and chose skilfully the moment of suppression to prevent it. It would hide from the public eye the truth of the success of the People's Convention, or the truth of the many removable hardships which the common people suffer in the conduct of the war. In particular it would remove any channel for expressing the uneasiness felt at Bevin's measures for the conscription of labor.

These, then, are some of the obvious reasons why the *Daily Worker* has been suppressed at this particular time. There are, on the other hand, very obvious and pressing reasons why it should be released again.

Our world is in the shock of change. A new world is about to be born. Chaos and upheaval threaten society. If ever the time was opportune to discuss the necessary changes and ease the way to a new order of life, that time is now. All voices must be heard. To fetter free thought is to invite disaster. It is to ask for change by violence instead of by peaceful progression which will benefit the individual and not harm the community.

How apposite at times like these are the words of the great champions of freedom, to which in gentler days we have paid lip homage. Now they come like the flash of a sword to sever true lovers of freedom from the false. Let these mighty words of Wendell Phillips summon all lovers of liberty to renewed and vigorous action: "If there is anything that cannot bear free thought, let it crack. Nothing but freedom, justice, and truth is of any permanent advantage to the mass of mankind. To these society, life itself, is always tending. 'The right to think, to know, to utter,' as John Milton said, 'is the dearest of all liberties.' Without this right there can be no liberty to any people; with it there can be no slavery."

George Bernard Shaw

The parliamentary protest against the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* was badly mismanaged. It began with one of the loudest cries of stinking fish on record. The rest was the usual stale phrase-making about freedom of the press. Freedom of the press in England is like the Habeas Corpus Act, boasted of as a palladium of British liberty until it becomes inconvenient to the government, and then immediately suspended. The House of Commons, having deliberately given to the War Cabinet all the powers it reviles the dictators for exercising, could hardly without stultifying itself round on it for doing likewise. Mr. Morison easily wiped the floor with all that rubbish.

The second mistake was making too much of the *Daily Worker* and too little of *The Week*, which was far less vulnerable. Both papers were suppressed, not for saying things that all the other papers were saying as well,

but for very wisely grasping the fact that a good understanding with Russia is all-important to us; for a war between the USSR and the British Commonwealth would make every intelligent Briton a defeatist. Civilization would be really at stake in it, with the Commonwealth on the wrong side. Professor Haldane, Mr. Ivor Montagu, Mr. Claude Cockburn, all persons of unquestionable mental capacity and knowledge of the modern world, knew this, and ran their papers accordingly. The War Cabinet, a coalition of old school ties and trade unionists, does not know it; it nurses a blind hatred of Russia

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because private property, with its sequel of idle parasitism and poverty, has been abolished there, all property being held subject to the public welfare, whilst trade unionism, though enormously more general and powerful than in England or America, is part of the state machinery and admits of no dictatorship so absolute as that of an English trade union secretary. Here, then, was the real and overwhelming case for Mr. Haldane and Mr. Cockburn. It was simply not mentioned in the House; and the War Cabinet had the debate all its own way.

It would have been far more sensible to suppress the *Times* and all the other papers which have for years carried on, and are still carrying on, a campaign of insult, calumny, and clamor for capitalist united front against Bolshevism. But that is not how adult suffrage works. We should be only too thankful that Messrs. Haldane, Montagu, and Cockburn have not been shot, as they would be if the War Cabinet could possibly be as stupid and ignorant in high politics as the majority of its constituents.

S. O. Davies, MP

My agreement or disagreement with the war policy of the *Daily Worker* is as immaterial as my reactions to the war policy of the big imperialistic daily newspapers. I listened anxiously to Mr. Herbert Morison's speech in the House of Commons. With others I waited in vain for any evidence he could submit in justification of his unprecedented action. Apparently he seemed content with treating the House of Commons with contempt, and in exploiting its prejudices—all to the accompaniment of a barrage of cheap and reckless vituperation. Frankly, I must confess that I have never heard such an amazingly irresponsible statement made by any Minister of the Crown on a matter of such grave and vital importance. The Home Secretary in the short space of about forty-five minutes, in a speech he will never live down, completely and devastatingly gave the lie to all the protestations of the government that this is a war for freedom and democracy.

A subsequent perusal of Hansard has not allayed my misgivings and alarm. I have honestly sought for some concrete reasons, or some arguable grounds, that might have remotely justified this extraordinarily dangerous and unique action on the part of a Labor Home Secretary. In this I have failed, and have been forced to the following conclusions:

(1) That the suppression of the *Daily Worker* is a deliberate suppression of opinion, the freedom of thought, and its expression.

(2) The Home Secretary's admission that the *Daily Worker* had done no harm, and that he suppressed it in case it might do harm, revealed an attitude far more akin to fascism than to democracy.

(3) His refusal to proceed against the paper under 2C instead of 2D was obviously an act of pure malice. To plead, on the one hand, that the procedure under the former was too slow and, on the other hand, to admit that his office had carefully watched the *Worker* during the last seventeen months, must be accepted as providing no justification for betraying the assurances of his predecessor at the Home Office.

(4) Thanks to the Home Secretary's action, I, and many others, find it impossible to dissociate the suppression of the *Daily Worker* from the imposition of industrial conscription and the releasing of certain fascists from prison. These three events were so timed as to create the widespread conviction that they were closely interrelated.

(5) Like the capitalist press I am compelled to accept the logic of this suppression of unpopular views. Mr. Morison had not even delivered his speech in the Commons before the press had anticipated his next step. Headlines such as "Police to Act against Red Agitators" appeared; a slogan wide enough to rope in every honest trade unionist, and every enthusiast in the Labor movement.

(6) This act is tragically reminiscent of the destruction of liberty in Germany, Italy, and France. It therefore behooves us, at whatever personal cost, to guard our hard-earned liberties with the unshaken conviction that a war that is made the excuse to rob us of any of those liberties cannot be a war for freedom and democracy.

H. G. Wells

I think that the publication of matter likely to be of use to the enemy, either by giving information or undermining morale, could be and should be controllable at the place and

time of the attempt. It should be dealt with as a specific offense. I consider the complete suppression of any periodical expressing any point of view however uncongenial to me is altogether undesirable. The *Daily Worker* and *The Week* have been first attacked because they are provocative in manner and represent a minority point of view, but manifestly, so long as they do not offend in the particular matters I have stated, the groups they represent are as much entitled to the enjoyment of free speech and criticism as any others. Their case is obviously only the opening one in a campaign of unlimited press intimidation.

Lord Ponsonby

Morison's decision with regard to the *Daily Worker* is only the first step in the gradual suppression of all criticism of the government.

All who value the maintenance of civil liberties will support the representatives of the *Daily Worker* in their protest.

If the government is afraid of Communist propaganda they should surely know that by driving it underground they will certainly strengthen it and draw to its support many who are not Communists.

It is interesting to note with what astuteness the onus for taking this objectionable step had been placed by the Tories on members of the Labor Party.

H. W. Nevinson

(Noted journalist and author)

As an old war correspondent I have been largely occupied in following the course of the war, and I have not studied the policy of the *Labor Monthly* or of the *Daily Worker*.

If the policy of both or either is in favor of "Revolutionary Defeatism," as has been represented by the government authorities and many papers, I heartily disagree with it, and I do not believe it would be supported by any but a very small minority of the British people. As a nation I am convinced we have no wish to fall under the control of Nazism as other fine and gallant peoples have fallen. I think we shall not submit to it even with the object of creating a further revolution in its place.

But as a journalist of fifty years' standing I much regret the suppression of the *Daily Worker* by summary action under a regulation which was agreed to only under a pledge that it would not be used except in case of invasion.

The government has broken its promise and dangerously infringed upon the freedom of the press, which is one of the liberties we are proud to uphold.

Sir Richard Acland, MP

If I am to comment on the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* you must allow me to state my views on the total position.

I think the *Daily Worker* criticism of government failures on the Home Front was, in general, extremely valuable. (I do not necessarily endorse all in detail.) But I think the *Daily Worker* attitude toward the war was wrong, and was based on a fundamentally wrong analysis of the total world situation. I am not 100 percent certain that regulations 2C and 94A were the best that could have been devised to protect a nation which overwhelmingly desires to go on with a war from those who would reduce its will to resist, but these regulations had been fully discussed with members of the House of Commons whose zeal for individual liberty is unquestionable, and they had not challenged these regulations. Therefore these regulations must be accepted. I am convinced myself that if the Home Secretary had taken individuals connected with the *Daily Worker* to court under these regulations they would have been convicted, not because our courts are corrupt, but because, in my view, the *Daily Worker* had offended against these regulations.

But it was wholly improper for the Home Secretary to proceed against the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* under 2D and 94B, which give the accused no chance of stating a case. That this has been done means that without

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the suppression of one more newspaper, every editor is under the menace of secret "warnings" directed to the proprietors of his paper. It has often been said that it is important not only that justice should be done, but that it should seem to be done. It is equally important not merely that press criticism should be free from threat, but that it should be known to be free. This cannot now be the case since the *Daily Worker* episode.

In addition, this episode makes it far harder for me to convince those tempted to accept the Communist case that it is in fact old-fashioned and wrong.

Furthermore, it drives discontent underground, where it is far more dangerous than on the surface.

These things represent the real mischief of the government's action.

Sir Hugh Roberton

(Conductor Glasgow Orpheus Choir)

We hear much of this "glorious new world" for which we are fighting. I am all for a glorious new world, a world in which the main pursuit of man will not be personal profit but public weal, a world in which no section of the public will be outcast, and haunted, as they are today, from the cradle to the grave; a world in which poverty and unemployment will be regarded as very nasty blots on our social escutcheon; a world in which the hoarders and monopolists will be saved against themselves and their inordinate vanity by expropriation; a world in which caste rule (which cannot be other than tyranny) will have disappeared; a world in which war (international brawling) will be as taboo as is street brawling today.

I look expectantly for signs of this glorious new world, and I am disappointed. Talk of it there is, but we had so much talk in 1914-18 that begin to be a little wary.

And now comes news of the suppression of the *Daily Worker*. Suppression! A dangerous road, my good friends!

Somehow I cannot bring myself to regard this particular case as a portent of the glorious new world. It seems to me more like a sign that the keepers of the rotten old world are determined to hold fast to that which they possess, and are prepared to use all the old machinery that their prototypes used long ago against Thomas Paine and his *Rights of Man*.

Now, I do not always find myself in agreement with the *Daily Worker*, although it more often reflects my point of view than, say, the London *Times* or the *Daily Mail*. But why suppress minority opinion at all? The minority was right in the last war. The minority was right in the Boer War. The minority must, methinks, be right in every war, since war itself is madness. Thus do we always see, when sanity returns, how foolish we have been. We lick our sores, but we never learn. We think we have learned when we prepare another generation for the shambles.

Well, suppression is one of the bitter fruits of war. It is born of intolerance, as intolerance is born of fear. It is the antithesis of liberty. Wherefore, every liberty-loving citizen should be up and doing in defense of the *Daily Worker's* right to expression. And if this right is to be challenged by the powers that be, then that challenge should be made in open court. To contend otherwise is to admit that the Nazi method is right. I am sure it is wrong.

"Where the devil is she going now?"
—New Masses, Oct. 1940.

"The 'Daily Worker' and New Masses should be suspended."
—Dorothy Thompson in her column, June 11, 1941.

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THE INTELLECTUAL UNDER FIRE

Reason shall be enthroned again, Samuel Sillen told the Writers and Artists Congress, despite the terror of the irrationals. The final obligations of literature and art.

WE CANNOT get very far in our understanding of the intellectual's function today unless we recognize the strategy of panic which the instigators of war and reaction are pursuing. Few of us need delude ourselves that we are not to some extent its unconscious victims. For the air has become charged with so much fear and suspicion and uncertainty that only the most active consciousness of its purpose can defend us from the hysteria which is being engendered. The press, the radio, the movies, and the President's firebrand chats unite to form a picture of chaos and black night. A concerted effort is made to foster the illusion that we now find ourselves in a mysterious universe in which the valid analyses of one year make no sense in the next.

In this period of the headline-mentality treatise, the publishers are encouraging the most flimsy and irresponsible guesses by experts hastily created at sales conferences. Definitions breed like maggots. For Lewis Mumford fascism is a "neurosis," for Max Lerner it is "a revolution in the viability of the modern state," for Waldo Frank it is "the throwback of the German psyche," for Archibald MacLeish it is "the revolution against." And their higher-paid colleagues, the columnists and commentators, daily ride their steeplechase to delirium.

All this befuddling sound and fury has, among other objectives, the methodical purpose of manipulating words and issues in such a way as to obscure the basic structure of our society. Correspondingly, a central function of the honest intellectual is to resist hysteria and to lay bare the reality which it is designed to conceal.

It is true, of course, that since the organization of the League of American Writers and the American Artists Congress many real and profound changes have taken place in this country and in the world at large. But these changes have not significantly altered the underlying social relations which we analyzed in 1935. They have had the effect rather of intensifying and clarifying these relations. In the same way, the program of intellectual responsibility which we formulated in 1935 requires no essential modifications. We need only make it more firm and more concrete to meet the challenge of the present crisis.

For this war to which the American people have been so deeply and unwillingly committed by the Roosevelt administration and its wealthy allies does not come to us as a bolt out of the blue. We organized in order to avert if possible and to end if necessary this calamity which we clearly foretold. Nor does the spreading threat of fascism both in our land and abroad strike us as a mysterious interruption in the normal processes of a profit economy fighting to maintain its declining power. It was our revulsion at what happened in Germany and our alarm at parallel trends in America which led us to join forces with the people in defense of freedom and culture six years ago. Throughout these six years we have opposed war and fascism with all the energies we could muster wherever these enemies of humanity lifted their heads of death.

This period of unlimited emergency for culture did not begin with a presidential proclamation. Its origins must be traced in the constricting coils of a monopolistic arrangement of society in which human values are subordinated to the urge for empire, in which minority and colonial peoples are the victims of oppressive discrimination, in which peace is a mocking interlude between wars, in which every step toward democracy is a hazardous undertaking against the dominating class. Is it not true, after all, that our most valid and valuable insight has been the understanding that the modern world is divided by a conflict of interest between a small privileged minority and the great masses of human creators on whose labors the minority thrives? From the beginning of the industrial revolution a vast body of literature in all countries has testified to the steadily increasing disproportion between social effort and social reward under a profit directed economy. From Blake and Burns and Shelley through Whitman and William Morris, Zola and Gorky, Nexo and Barbusse, a great host of creative talents have taken their stand with the people against usurped and unearned authority. They have warned that this authority was driving toward universal destruction. And we who kept trust with the tradition of struggle against the destroyers found ourselves destined to continue this tradition at a moment when hesitation implied surrender to death.

For the continuation of the exploitation system under modern conditions means not only the ever more cruel frustration of human justice but the destruction of science and art as well. Yet those at the controls, even though they are doomed by history, will not easily relinquish their power to the people. They insist that if civilization as *they* knew it must die, then the whole structure of civilization, laboriously built over the centuries, must collapse with them. They resort to suppression and terror to crush the will-to-live of the people as expressed in trade unions, working class parties, peace organizations. They draft men to defend democracy in Dakar and they rush them to defeat democracy in the factories of Los Angeles. In an age of plenty they confront us with an economy of starvation. In an age of the breakdown of geographical isolation, they multiply wars. In Germany, Herr Rust says he wants to shoot when he hears the word culture. And in America, Mr. Coudert says we ought to put bullets in teachers' heads, for "It is going to require brutal treatment to handle these teachers. . . . We cannot live with them nor they with us."

In an America where such beasts go howling down the streets sicked on by a brass check press, what shall one say of the intellectual's —of any conscientious citizen's—responsibility?

THERE have been those writers and artists who believed that the primary and even the sole obligation of the creator was to his own craft. They have insisted that the artist represents a distinct class in society, that he is therefore above the battle of other classes, and that he will make his best contribution to society by remaining in isolation from it. In an earlier period, this attitude had some justification. For it expressed the contradiction, as in the case of Flaubert, between the creator's sense of the dignity of his art and his sense of the indignity of bourgeois society. Art-for-art's sake was basically a reflection of the artist's despair at being unable to function in an environment dominated by the stock exchange. But since the artist could not actually remove himself from society, and since he opposed any identification with the people, he remained what he despised, a bourgeois.

The artist who holds such a theory today has purchased with it a seat in the stock exchange itself. Thus Stephen Spender and W. H. Auden have grown bored with their titillating flirtation with the working class, and they are now making advances to "humanity." In embracing broad-bosomed humanity, says Spender, he will really be embracing all classes. His inexhaustible love for all mankind will drive away our troubles, fill our pockets, clear our slums, end our wars, and possibly even, if we are really good, entitle us to enjoy his paeans to humanity, which he admits quite frankly only the leisured classes are capable of understanding. At least one source was sufficiently appreciative to thank Mr. Spender for his generous proposal. Alongside an editorial berating strikers for their disloyalty to national unity, the New York *Times* carried an editorial in honor of Mr. Spender's loyalty to humanity.

Another timely example of the new era of good will on which literature is embarking was the recent *New Republic* literary supplement edited by Edmund Wilson. The trouble with American literature of the past decade, says the editorial foreword, was its preoccupation with matters of social concern. The collection of trumped up trivia which followed was supposed to inaugurate a "non-political" age in art, an age, that is to say, which will not have the slightest resemblance to reality.

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This talk of "non-political" art at this moment is sheer bunk whose purpose is to put across a very definite political intention. The very editorial which issued a manifesto against politics did not deny itself the luxury of attributing *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Native Son* and *The People, Yes* to that enigmatic power which sleeplessly directs everything, everywhere. This resurrection of art-for-art's sake is an unmistakable bid for cooperation with the forces of darkness.

A second group of writers have more openly identified themselves, particularly in moments of crisis, with those whom they regard as the permanent patrons of the arts. Stripped of all hypocrisy, the determining characteristic of their concept of intellectual responsibility is the belief that culture must conserve the position of the present rulers. It must help resist a threatening multitude whose reverence for unearned reputation or property is not to be relied upon. The intellectual becomes an apologist for reaction. "There are those," said Barbusse in the bloody days of 1916, "who bury themselves in the past, on whose lips are the sayings only of bygone days, the traditionalists for whom an injustice has legal force because it is perpetuated, who aspire to be guided by the dead, who strive to subordinate progress and the future and all their palpitating passion to the realm of ghosts and nursery rhymes."

These "responsibles," as they now designate themselves with much self-approval, are against art-for-art's sake, but definitely. The difference between the tactic of Stephen Spender and Archibald MacLeish may be suggested by an analogy. In the early days of fascist Germany, Goebbels approved the literature of fantasy and fable, the blood and soil abstractions of an Aryanized humanity. It had been necessary to liquidate realism, because realism was identified with the literature of social progress. But it was soon discovered that a mistake had been made. For if it was true, as the Nazis claimed, that the new Germany was a land of unparalleled glory, then that glory would presumably be reflected in an art which dealt with the present. The failure of art to do so could not easily be explained to a literate people. Therefore, a new edict was issued—since fascist books, like other corpses, are created by edict—ordering a literature that would celebrate and adorn the new scheme of things. No more escapism, no more fantasy. Responsibility. The new literature must still be an insult to the intelligence, but it must at least insult the intelligence in contemporary terms.

This second tactic bears a curious resemblance to the theories of the intellectual's function which our unofficial poet laureate has recently been expounding. Mr. MacLeish has developed a theory of literary accommodation to the administration's policy. There is a clear parallel between Mr. Roosevelt's last Armistice Day address, in which the President condemned all critics of the last war as unpatriotic, and Mr. MacLeish's effort to remove from our memory the finest anti-war books and plays of the last two decades. Mr. MacLeish acknowledges the fact that these works truly reflected their authors' experiences; and he even pays tribute to their artistic merit. But truth and art, he discovers, may not be expedient. They may "demoralize" our young people; they may, in other words, educate their feelings and stimulate their resistance to the slogans of sacrifice by which an earlier generation was tragically betrayed. The implications of this view of responsibility are plain. If works of art are to be evaluated not according to their truth or esthetic value but by their expediency in the light of war policy, then it is not merely the anti-war books that must be branded as unpatriotic and "demoralizing" but all books which challenge the official version of American life. From this point of view *The Grapes of Wrath* is a treasonable document tending to foment internal discord. From this point of view, several of Mr. MacLeish's own past works are boring from within the archives of the congressional library.

During the last war, Randolph Bourne observed that "Only in a world where irony was dead could an intellectual class enter war at the head of such illiberal cohorts in the avowed cause of world liberalism and world democracy." In urging writers and artists to hew to the line of reaction, the illiberals are in effect asking them to seal their eyes to reality, to accept the unacceptable, to glorify the inglorious. Their mission is to sanctify purposes and techniques which in their crude state, as propounded by their non-intellectual allies, have awakened only the resistance of the people. Lewis Mumford's lofty persuasions to suicide, Max Lerner's socialism by consent of Knudsen, Waldo Frank's bleary-eyed and rumble-throated mumbojumboism, and Vincent Sheean's inspired press agentry for the empire on whose enslaved peoples the sun never rises—these are variations of a common attempt to provide high-sounding sanctions for the destruction of American freedom. They remind us of those seventeenth-century prelates of confusion whom Milton unforgettably depicted: ". . . if it should happen that a tyrant . . . should come to grasp the Sceptre, here were his spearmen and his lances, here were his firelocks ready, he should need no other pretorian band nor pensionary than these, if they should once with their perfidious preachments awe the people."

BUT the sermons of sacrifice which they preach have not awed the people. Their shrill lamentations testify to their failure to win the support of the masses. They call for hope, and they provide a program of hopelessness. Their "faith for living" is in reality a faith for dying. And now that they are accumulating evidence that the people is a great beast, since the people will not heed them, one notes increasingly in their work a furious impatience with the popular will and a disposition to use more immediately persuasive measures of a non-literary character. The *Nation* and *New Republic* heil Coudert; every issue is a lynching bee. Our ex-liberals embrace storm troopers like Jan Valtin. They concoct versions of American tradition which might give pause even to a Kenneth Roberts. They forget that the concentration camps of Europe are full of *Nation* and *New Republic* editors who outlived their service to fascism. Or perhaps they remember, and that accounts for the zeal with which they try to make their services indispensable.

One of these editors, Malcolm Cowley, has already tossed his towel in the ring. He remembers the day, poor Malcolm, when he spoke up in what he recalls as dusty and drafty halls. But today he seems no happier, even though he is no longer exposed to head colds raising money for the boys in Spain. He announced just a few weeks ago that "As a political force, the intellectuals have probably been defeated for this generation. . . ." His writings from now on are to be an elaborate word crocheting to be enjoyed without reference to the influence they will not have. Contrast this mood of abject surrender, this pathetic confession of impotence—just contrast it with the spirit which has prevailed at our Congress in Defense of Culture. Let me say as a member of the national board that the courage, the determination, the enthusiasm, the clarity which has been manifested here this week-end is an inspiring reward to those who planned these sessions. All of us here have had a sense not of defeat but of rejuvenation. Let the Cowleys speak for themselves. We are only now beginning to fight.

For in cementing our bonds with the working masses of Americans we have reinforced the third and only fruitful concept of the intellectual's function. This concept is based on the conviction, it is based on the truth, that the only truly creative force in society is the working class and its allies in the middle classes, the plain people of this country and of all countries. On the success of this force depends the survival and enrichment of cultural life, and it is therefore only in alliance with it that the artist, the scientist, and the writer can realize their aspirations to portray the truth and to further the common good. It is our privilege and our purpose, within the limits of our skills, to help articulate the experiences and desires of the people. Our final obligation is to be faithful to the truth. We are not called upon by our fellows in the ranks to justify an unjust war. We are not called upon to replace science with mysticism, to repudiate history, to confuse a genuine devotion to country with narrow jingoism.

The eloquent Jaures once said: "A little internationalism turns one way from the fatherland, a greater internationalism returns

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one to it." Jefferson and Franklin, Emerson and Howells, Dreiser and Lincoln Steffens—all our genuinely patriotic spokesmen—rejected the philosophy of cultural isolationism. Science does not respect frontiers, no matter how they may bristle with guns. The great miracle of art is that, while rooted in the experience of a specific people and time, it reaches the hearts and minds of all men. And yet the war laureates are trying to teach us a different tune. Henry Seidel Canby wants us to consolidate our cultural bonds not with all countries but with the English-speaking countries. Because we speak the same language, he says, there is a natural affinity of thinking and feeling among us which does not extend to the non-English-speaking countries. What a commentary on its political program is this cultural program of Union Now! And Van Wyck Brooks laments the fact that so many of our novels are being written by the children of immigrants, who give only a *one-sided picture* of American justice. During the Soviet-Finnish war, when Robert E. Sherwood was getting in practice for his later career as America's number one ghost writer, Mr. Eugene Ormandy, the conductor, was nearly prevented from opening his New York concert season with an all-Russian program. Is there now to be a Russian-speaking music and a French-speaking music and an English-speaking music?

As writers, as artists, as thinking men and women, it is our responsibility to study and profit from the cultural contributions of all peoples. And because we, above all others, can ill afford to tolerate moral embargoes on culture and truth, I want to say a few words in answer to those who seek to put blinkers on the American people and who denounce as treasonable any interest in or concern with the Soviet Union. Their attempt to suppress free and untrammelled inquiry into the Soviet achievement is *prima facie* evidence of their fear that we may discover truths which do not square with the lies of reaction. How can any thoughtful citizen *fail* to be interested? About a week ago, the following statement was transmitted to the Congress of the United States, not through some devious route but through the National Resources Planning Board: "The primary object of Soviet science is the welfare of the workers rather than an increasing profit from production."

And it is interesting, too, that in the year 1940, for example, the Chaucer and Hardy anniversaries were celebrated with more enthusiasm by Soviet schools and libraries than by the Churchill government. Or that while the Zola anniversary was hushed up by the Daladier regime, it was widely commemorated in the USSR. Or that while the finest intellects of Germany have been herded by Hitler into concentration camps, shot, or exiled—in the Soviet Union the brilliant young novelist, Mikhail Sholokhov, is elected freely by his countrymen to represent them in the supreme legislative council. Or that instead of cutting down drastically on book production, as has been done in virtually every other country, the Soviets issue enormous editions not only of their own writers, but of the Russian pre-Revolutionary classics, of Shakespeare and Shelley, of Stendhal and Balzac, and of our own Jack London and Mark Twain and Whitman and Dreiser. Or that many gifted young American writers are sold in larger editions in the Soviet Union than they are here. Or that writers and artists are honored and paid more highly than elsewhere.

Can it be that these interesting facts are related to another interesting fact: that this is the first country in the world where the people own the products of their own toil? We have a right, we have an intellectual duty, to study these interesting facts in the same scientific and friendly spirit with which Jefferson studied the French Revolution or with which Wendell Phillips studied the liberation movements of the mid-nineteenth century in Europe, or with which, indeed, Lincoln Steffens and John Reed studied the results of the ten days that shook the world.

The spirit of a literature can only be as great as the social soil from which it springs, and the translated novels of Leonov, Kataev, Alexis Tolstoy, Sholokhov, Fadayev, and others mirror a world in which there is no racial or national discrimination, no oppression of man by man, no bitterness and futility and despair. Deny it who will, this is the fact. Such a literature can spring only from a way of life. There is no better confirmation of the Dean of Canterbury's observations in *The Soviet Power* than the cultural expression of the Soviet writers and artists themselves. The treason to American culture lies not in the presentation of such facts but in their suppression and distortion by the same bigoted forces which seek to eradicate our educational system. The treason to our genuine national interests lies not in the insistence of the truth that the Soviet Union is at peace, desires to remain at peace, and is ready to cooperate with all peoples who wish to preserve peace. The treason lies rather with those who break the backs of many words in order to stir up, quite unsuccessfully, war fever against our most powerful potential ally.

The forces with which we have identified ourselves have nothing to gain by evasion or deceit. There is no need to pretend that in the days ahead the road will be unobstructed for writers and artists of integrity. Many of us can testify eloquently from our own experience that the channels of communication are being steadily narrowed. The commercial publishers are prolific in excuses for rejecting manuscripts which only a year or two ago they might have welcomed. The threat of censorship becomes a reality as the Dies committee, the Rapp-Coudert committee, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Department of Justice go whipping up the sort of hysteria which in a number of communities has finally expressed itself in an actual burning of books.

There are those who feel that, under such circumstances, it is the better part of wisdom to beat a hasty retreat or to remain silent. Those people aren't here with us at this congress and we needn't for the moment speak of them. But there are perhaps others here who honestly feel that good sense dictates that one trim one's sails or that one disguise and dilute one's vision. On the surface, this counsel no doubt appears very shrewd and very practical to some people. But I believe they are terribly shortsighted. The actual effect of this strategy is to concede in advance to the bookburners. It is the strategy of censoring oneself for the sake of not being censored by somebody else. But it is precisely this sort of retreat that the fascist-minded seek to engineer by their all-out mobilization of panic and terror. They are banking on us to win half their battle for them, and that is just what we would be doing if we started pussyfooting on our principled belief in and demand for our right as Americans to present to the public the results of our honest thinking and imaginative endeavor. We should have wrecked our own all-out mobilization for peace and democracy on the success of which depends the survival of our culture. And, having won half of reaction's battle for them, we should, I fear, soon discover that even our ingenious and circuitous and compromising vision which we hoped would somehow get by would be blacked out.

No, the times demand forthrightness, not evasion. I believe that Dalton Trumbo did a great service to his fellow writers when he stood up to his publishers and insisted that they leave in the anti-war passages of *The Remarkable Andrew* which they claimed were irrelevant. And the teachers who are standing up to the assassins of education, those teachers who are insisting, at whatever immediate cost, that truth is a permissible virtue in the classroom, they too deserve our deepest gratitude. Let us fight this hysteria. Let us rip out the impulse that whispers: "Oh, what's the sense in starting a book now? Who'll ever publish it?" Or: "Maybe writing isn't important now. Maybe I'll come back to it when things settle down." For these whispers do not spring from ourselves. They are the enemy talking.

Thomas Paine did not pull his punches in an earlier crisis of our history, and his bold voice carried over the storm of abuse and repression to an eager and responding nation. And his cause prevailed. "I will not equivocate," cried Garrison in the teeth of the slaveholders and the Boston broadcloth mob. "I will not retreat a single inch. And I will be heard!" And, by God, he *was* heard. Emile Zola thundered his *J'Accuse* against the militarists and anti-Semites, and he thundered in strong and unmistakable accents, not in literary acrostics. Henri Barbusse published his *Under Fire* in 1916, and in the very midst of that bloody year it burned itself into the consciousness of all peoples. Randolph Bourne published *The War and the Intellectuals* in 1917, and it inspires us today as it inspired the finest spirits of his generation. And John Reed wrote *The Ten Days that Shook the World* in the very heat of struggle.

Hasn't this congress brought home to us,

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"Army's Occupation [of Inglewood, Cal.,] . . . Inspires New Confidence in Financial Circles"—New York "Times," June 10, 1941.

every last one of us, the splendid opportunities that unfold before us? We have the people who are rising to the magnificent fury of a Swift or Goya as they excoriate the brutal hypocrisies of a war which is scarring and mutilating the populations of the world. We have those, who, like Diderot and Jefferson, will enthrone reason despite the terror of the irrationals. We have those who see in the awakening consciousness and militance of the people the near promise of Shelley's soaring vision of mankind emancipated. Think of the names: Dreiser and Art Young, Richard Wright and Rockwell Kent, Vito Marcantonio, Mike Gold, Dashiell Hammett, Genevieve Taggard and Alfred Kreymborg, Earl Browder, Lynd Ward, Ruth McKenney, John Howard Lawson, William Gropper, Marc Blitzstein, Albert Maltz: a whole host of shining names, fighters all. All of us, and particularly the young writers. And beyond us, giving us all our strength and determination and confidence, the people—the people rising in their wrath and wisdom in every factory town and hamlet, in the basic industries, in steel and coal and planes and autos, the people everywhere asserting their will to live. Is it not the necessary and final obligation of literature and art, as Gorky wrote, to embark at last upon its epic role, "the role of an inner force which firmly welds people in the knowledge of the community of their suffering and desires, the awareness of the unity of their striving for a beautiful and free life"? Let us but determine to fulfill this obligation and we shall reach those great audiences of which Whitman dreamed. And as we break down the artificial barriers between these audiences and ourselves we shall learn even more deeply the strength of our ties, the identity of our interests as workers and creators. In this enriched discovery lies our future: our means of getting published, our means of getting circulated, our means of victory in our common struggle for peace, for democracy, for culture freedom, and for our rightful share in the fruits of our toil.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

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THEY ARE STILL FIGHTING

The Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade meet to renew pledges. Voices in behalf of the Spanish people. A story of "stale" bread. From Cuba to China. . . .

RECENTLY a convention was held by delegates of a national organization. These delegates represented only 1,200 actual members—the living members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. But they also represented the aspirations of millions of our citizens. They met to renew the pledge they took when they joined the forces of the Spanish republican army—the pledge to fight fascism wherever it appears: in Spain, on the picket line at home, in the union hall, in the press, or in the legislative chambers of the Congress of the United States. These men, fighting anti-fascists, are still fighting. The military fight in which they engaged depleted their original numbers by some 1,500 men. They are still on the firing line.

Now there are only 1,200 of them left—a national organization of 1,200 men! On the face of it, this would seem to be an anomaly. What influence can a group of 1,200 men, however determined, wield in a land of 130,000,000 people? Well, if these 1,200 did not command the adherence, the respect, and yes—the love, of the millions, they could do nothing. But the fact—very sad to their enemies, the most articulate and determined reactionaries and enemies of our people—that they *do* command this respect, this adherence and this love, accounts for the considerable influence this organization does command throughout the nation.

To its national convention held in the heart of America, greetings arrived from all around the world. There was a greeting from William Kardash, veteran who lost a leg in Spain. Kardash is in Canada, where he was recently elected to the legislative assembly of Manitoba despite the terror that broods over our warring neighbor to the north. He stood for the assembly on his record in Spain. From veterans in Yugoslavia and England, from organizations in Cuba, Panama, and Mexico, from conquered France there came expressions of solidarity and undying adherence to the cause these men will represent and support so long as they may live. From leaders of progressive thought in our country, there came greetings—from the composer Earl Robinson and the congressman Vito Marcantonio; from Tom Mooney and from Herman Shumlin; from APM clubs and unions who lost members in the Spanish struggle, there came expressions of adherence and affection. From fraternal organizations and Spanish societies there came greetings. From eighteen former International Brigade doctors, speaking in memory of the great Dr. Norman Bethune, there came a Chinese flag and a cablegram from Kweiyangkwei, where these men are continuing the struggle they initiated in Spain.

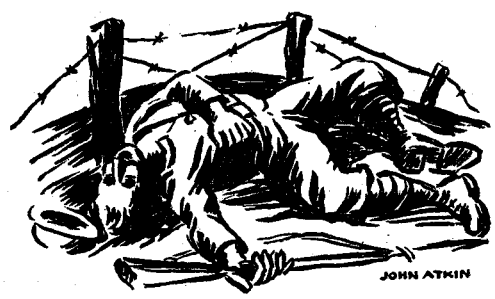
At the mass meeting of the convention in Chicago's Hotel Midlands, the former Cong. John T. Bernard spoke: "I love these brave American boys," he said. "I esteem and respect them for what they did and are doing. I shall always esteem and respect these men who have written one of the most glorious pages in American history." Bernard is not alone in his appreciation, in his support. The inarticulate masses of our countrymen support them, and they become suddenly articulate when the Veterans are attacked by their common enemies. We have seen this happen time and time again:

In Baltimore a Red-baiting labor official attacked the two Veteran-leaders of the Shipyard Workers local, Dorland and Bradley. The 3,400 workers of that local stood behind them. The international officers suspended them; the 3,400 members backed them up. The local itself was suspended by its international, and the local, in support of its veteran-leaders, has refused to pay dues to its international, and still supports these men.

In Washington the dis-Honorable Martin Dies launched an attack upon the veterans and haled their leaders with subpenas. From the stand, the national commander of the Veterans, Milton Wolff, twenty-five-year-old fur-worker and former commander of the Lincoln Battalion, defied the Texas Red Herring. His testimony, and the testimony of young Gerald Cook, the national secretary, drew spontaneous cheers from the listeners in the committee-room. The attack was dropped.

In Detroit the minions of J. Edgar Hoover raided the homes of local citizens who were accused of helping to recruit men for the Spanish republican army (three years *ex post facto)*. So great a national protest arose at this unwarranted act of terrorism that the then Attorney General (and the now Supreme Court Justice) Jackson was forced to vacate the subpenas and issue what amounted to a public apology. The people are zealous of their heroes, and they can speak up in unmistakable tones when the time has come to speak.

IN EVERY WAY, in all manners and accents, the Veterans continue to speak for the Spanish people they defended, and for their countrymen in whose interests they also fought when they went to Spain. A Veteran, sailing to Spain as a ship's cook, recently helped to feed the starving people of Asturias. Three days before reaching Bilbao he used up all the ship's flour to make hundreds of loaves of bread. The crew, after two days, refused to eat this "stale" bread, and helped to distribute it to the Spanish women and children when the ship touched port.



Activity and leadership in the people's organizations is the hall-mark of the Lincoln Veteran. In Los Angeles the Veterans' post has mobilized the people to feed and clothe Spanish refugees and IB Veterans in Mexico. Two tons of clothing and other supplies recently crossed the border into Mexico. Veterans in Pennsylvania have been arrested for mobilizing anti-war sentiment, and thrown into prison. Their comrades and supporters work to effect their release and implement their protest. There are Veterans on the perpetual picket line before the White House these days; there are Veterans who edit and write for trade union papers, who hold office as union representatives and who speak daily for the American Peace Mobilization—explaining, pointing out the nature of this war, drawing upon their personal experience of warfare and their understanding of the forces that lie behind the present conflict, to clarify the people's efforts to understand the identity of the warmongers wherever they are found.

The Veterans cannot be smeared despite all the efforts that have been made; they are armored by their record and their activities. They cannot be accused of being Hitler's agents when they demand peace instead of war. They fought Hitler before it became popular to fight him. They fought fascism before Ralph Ingersoll, the editor of *PM,* announced he was an anti-fascist. They fought reaction, and they died in battle (actual, not verbal battle) before our local reactionaries assumed the mantle of "Americanism" in an effort to conceal their ulterior purposes.

"Spain," said the Veterans in convention assembled, "remains today close to the heart and conscience of all progressive humanity. Let us seek in that heart and conscience, the courage and strength for the trying battles which lie ahead. Let us again resolve, with renewed fervor, that the Yanks are not coming, that the American people shall be spared the tragedy of bloodshed and war, that an America at peace shall advance to a fuller life and a richer freedom."

This is a statement consonant with the fullest implications of the Bill of Rights, a statement that cannot be attacked as un-American or subversive. In this America, of which the Veterans are blood and bone, they continue the struggle they waged in Spain—for peace and human dignity, for the liberation of the human spirit.

ALVAH BESSIE.

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THE AEF LANDS IN CALIFORNIA

What happened in the historic aircraft strike at Inglewood. Military dictatorship versus a decent standard of living. "Seventy-five and ten." The battle cry will long be heard.

Los Angeles.

NEVER again will the workers of North American Aviation, Inc., applaud President Roosevelt when they see his face in the newsreels. Workers know him finally as a strikebreaker who ordered the army to take over a mammoth corporation to protect its already swollen profits from their just demands for a living wage.

The 11,500 "second generation Americans" in North American's production department were suffering under a minimum wage of fifty cents hourly. Living costs in the Los Angeles area were rising daily. In the past year, meat had risen twenty-one to fifty-eight percent, depending upon the cut; eggs had gone up seventeen percent; milk twenty percent. Clothing was more expensive and the state division of immigration and housing predicted an acute housing shortage soon.

After months of organization, Local 683, United Automobile Workers-CIO, defeated the AFL International Association of Machinists in a National Labor Relations Board election. Certified by the labor board as collective bargaining agent at North American (General Motors subsidiary), the CIO union signed thousands of the workers who had voted AFL, bringing its membership to 8,000.

A rank and file bargaining committee, headed by Lew H. Michener, West Coast UAW director, started negotiations with the management on April 16. Their chief demands were a seventy-five-cent minimum and a ten-cent blanket wage increase for every worker. The company stalled negotiations for over a month until May 21, without ever getting around to discussion of the basic wage demands. Richard T. Frankensteen, UAW national aircraft director, came on the scene then. The paunchy, confident ex-football player promised to get the workers their "seventy-five and ten."

By 5,834 to 210, the unionists voted for strike action. Frankensteen set May 28 as the date for the walkout. The case was certified to the National Defense Mediation Board in Washington. There, on May 28, it was agreed that wage increases would be granted retroactive to May 1. The strike was forestalled—once.

The stalling was on again. Mediation Board officials threatened union representatives. The Dies committee imported stoolpigeons from Los Angeles, members of a Vigilante Americans association, who tried to discredit union leaders by calling them Communists. Frankensteen scheduled the strike again for June 3. Back to Inglewood rushed the rank and file representatives. The strike was averted—twice.

But the bargaining committee was empowered to call it when necessary. Michener and the three other members returned to Washington on June 2. In Inglewood, the workers were hot, demanding action on the "seventy-five and ten." Frankensteen failed to appear at the Mediation Board proceedings.

The runaround was endless. It became too much for the North American workers to bear. What good is a retroactive clause without a wage increase, they asked. At 3 AM on June 5, with full approval of the Washington and Inglewood members of the bargaining committee, the sprawling factory was closed tighter than the belt around a cop's belly.

BY DAWN, thousands of workers formed the largest picket line ever seen in Southern California, a line that stretched for a mile in some places eight strikers deep. The placards announced: "You Can't Have a Honey If You Ain't Got No Money," and "Fifty Cents an Hour Ain't Patriotic, Mr. Kindelberger."

J. H. Kindelberger, president of the company who was in Washington for the Mediation Board finagling, announced the plant would be shut down completely. Sidney Hillman and OPM director William S. Knudsen, ex-boss of General Motors, which cuts in on North American profits, denounced the strike as "sabotaging national defense." J. W. Buzzell, secretary of the Los Angeles AFL Central Labor Council, offered himself as a strikebreaker. He said thousands of the strikers were still AFL at heart and against the strike. He called a "mass meeting" to gather men to go back into the plant. Six men showed up.

"No comment" was all Frankensteen would say when he arrived in Los Angeles by plane on the strike's second day. He didn't go near the picket lines. He closeted himself in the expensive Biltmore Hotel, held secret conferences with local CIO leaders, and long telephone conversations with Hillman and R. J. Thomas, national UAW president.

Rumors that Frankensteen was selling out and going to start a "back to work" movement drummed in every picket's brain. They tried not to believe the rumors. After all, when Frankensteen set the first strike date, he had assured the membership that there "would be no compromise" on the "seventy-five and ten."

But only the next day, Saturday, the workers learned that Frankensteen had gone down the inevitable road any labor leader must take who plays along with the administration. He was fighting against the economic interests of the workers, ready to act as a strikebreaker and scab-herder.

For hours, the rank and file committee stormed with Frankensteen behind locked doors in the CIO building after they had refused to meet him at the Biltmore Hotel. But on emerging from that meeting, Frankensteen, who said he spoke also for Philip Murray, told reporters: "I recommend that the strikers go back to work immediately."

Elmer Freitag, Local 683 chairman, said curtly: "It is the unanimous opinion of this strike strategy committee that the men do not go back to work until they have won their wage demands."

Simultaneously, President Roosevelt announced the army would take over North American on Monday if the strikers weren't back on the job. An Inglewood draft board said it was reclassifying strikers. The OPM "denounced and condemned" the strike, ordered the men back in immediately.

"If the government takes over the plant it takes over the aspects and obligations of industry," said Bob Mallary, bargaining committee member. "We are going to continue our strike no matter under what conditions the plant is run until we get our seventy-five and ten."

Aircraft workers are young men. The North American picket lines were manned mainly by fellows between twenty and thirty years of age. Most of them had had no previous union experience; hundreds had been in the union only two weeks. They thought President Roosevelt was running a bluff on them. The state CIO and the Los Angeles CIO Industrial Union Council were 100 percent behind them. Telegrams of support from AFL and CIO unions, American Peace Mobilization groups, and other progressive organizations came to them by the hundreds from throughout the nation.

The strikers issued a statement charging that "Richard Frankensteen is attempting to sell out the North American Workers by advocating a back to work movement." As Frankensteen on a nationwide broadcast said their struggle was "Communist inspired" and that the strike was a "wildcat" without official CIO sanction, pickets chanted a new verse to an old song:

> Frankensteen is having a time,
> Parley-voo.
> Frankensteen is having a time,
> Parley-voo.
> Frankensteen is having a time,
> Trying to break our picket line!
> Hinkey-dinkey, parley-voo.

The open break between the strikers and Frankensteen became a Grand Canyon at a

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mass meeting in a bean field attended by 10,000 persons Sunday afternoon. Bargaining committee members lashed at Frankensteen as a "stoolpigeon," "fink," "scab," and "strikebreaker," explaining that he had been trying to "sell you out" even while they were in negotiations with the Mediation Board in Washington, and warning that "he can sell a sack of cement to a seagull." All the while Frankensteen sat grinning at their feet. Strikers booed every mention of his name.

After an hour, Frankensteen arose to address the meeting. His self-confidence disappeared. His legs trembled and he folded like a jack-knife, before the carefully prepared "back to work" speech got under way. Later he was escorted from the bean field by the strike patrol, followed by hoots and catcalls.

On Monday morning, Southern California workers went through the most eventful four hours of their labor history. The Los Angeles CIO Council ordered officials and organizers of all its ninety affiliated locals to appear at North American at 5 AM. Every available CIO worker was asked to come and join the picket line. Ten thousand strikers and sympathizers formed mass picket lines before each of North American's nine gates by 6 AM. The majority, however, concentrated before the main gate across from a "bull pen" of barbed wire the company erected two days after the original strike vote was taken. Automobiles stretched down the Imperial Highway by the factory as far as the eye could see. One thousand armed cops were on duty. Barehanded pickets, women and even some children among them, maintained perfect order—but their circling lines cut off all the plant gates.

The first scab tried to drive into the bull pen at 6:10. Pickets swooped on his auto, actually pushed it back onto the highway. From then on, there was action at practically every gate as sporadic attempts to crash through were made. The first strikebreaker to get into the bull pen made it at 6:30 by bowling over a woman picket with his car.

Mayor Fletcher Bowron, the man reelected just thirty days before with CIO support, appeared in a limousine at 7:10 with Los Angeles Police Chief Hohmann. Mistaking him for a scab, pickets at gate four kept his auto out after a fierce melee with cops. Bowron and Hohmann got in through another entrance. They went directly to the main gate. Pickets there recognized the chubby little mayor, who looks like a physical cross between New York's LaGuardia and Herbert Hoover. They cheered him; he was their friend come to help them.

Bowron and Hohmann went into a huddle with Philip M. "Slim" Connelly, state CIO president. They wanted the picket lines parted to allow strikebreakers through. Up to that time, only nine scabs had gotten into the plant, one with his clothes torn off. Connelly said he couldn't allow it. "Well, it seems these men want to go back to work and it is our duty to let them go back peacefully," said Mayor Bowron.

A solid wedge of 200 coppers was at the gate. "I'll break it up," said Hohmann. He signalled the police and they rushed. Pickets beat them back. Tear gas bombs looking like red tomato cans hurtled threw the air, red hot and bursting fumes before they hit the ground. The picket line fell back. "Throw 'em back!" shouted strikers.

The wind was blowing from the picket line toward the cops. Scores of pickets grabbed the bombs—seventy-five were thrown—and started hurling them back. Within five minutes, the picket lines were reformed, more cops than workers were wiping their eyes, and no scabs had gotten inside.

"Hold that line!" chanted the strikers. Bowron ordered another police attack. While cops adjusted gas masks and fingered billies, far down three roads converging on the plant was seen the glint of sun on burnished steel and thin brown lines.

It was the troops; regulars from China service and the coast artillery, not more than fifteen percent of them draftees. Strikers cheered. They brandished placards stating: "Welcome Army; Keep Out Scabs."

Three trucks filled with soldiers with fixed bayonets on their rifles and loaded machine guns peering over the tailgates pulled up at the main gate and covered the picket line. Hundreds of foot soldiers, commanded by Col. Jesse A. Ladd and specially trained for strike duty, marched steadily on the strikers. Cheers stopped as the workers were forced back by the bare bayonets and socks from rifle butts.

Twenty-seven-year-old picket captain Carl Clement was stabbed in the right thigh. A forty-seven-year-old WPA worker who was burning brush and didn't move out of the troopers' way quickly enough also was bayoneted in the leg.

Hundreds of pickets were herded into the bull pen. Other thousands, however, followed the advice of the strikers' sound truck announcer and reformed the picket lines just beyond the soldiers.

By 10 AM, the Army was in complete control, cops were being relieved of duty and Lieut. Col. Charles E. Branshaw, air corps officer in charge, was wiring President Roosevelt that the strike was broken and workers were streaming into the plant. But only 300 scabs guarded by the troops and cops entered the plant that morning.

Colonel Branshaw decided no picketing was to be allowed within a mile of the plant, which was under practical martial law, although it had not been declared. The steel-helmeted troops broke up the second picket line. Sixteen of the active men on that line—Labor Attorney George Shibley among them—were singled out, placed under "military arrest," and taken to Fort MacArthur.

The workers were held at the fort for six and one-half hours incommunicado. No charges were placed against them. They weren't allowed to phone and lawyers weren't permitted to see them. Instead, they were given the third degree by FBI agents, before being marched out of the fort and told to "Scram!"

Again and again the workers tried to reform the picket lines. Each time they were dispersed by soldiers until army outposts were established one mile from the factory and even reporters had trouble getting through.

North American strikers still were determined to "hang it tough" until they got the "seventy-five and ten"—a determination strengthened by news that Frankensteen had fired five UAW international representatives who refused to go along on the sellout and had suspended the rank and file bargaining committee. Strikers joked that the international representatives were "fired for union activity."

Next day, 2,500 gathered at the CIO building to determine their next steps. Men who have been working for fifty cents hourly and raising a family on it, to boot, haven't much to spare for a war chest for a long strike. The union funds were dangerously low. And the North American plant had been turned into an armed camp. Picket lines were prohibited. Draft boards acting on Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey's "work or fight" order from Washington were reclassifying strikers.

The strikers still wanted their "seventy-five and ten." The question was how to get it. Acting on the unanimous recommendation of their bargaining committee—a recommendation backed by Harry Bridges, California CIO director—they voted to return to work if the government agreed that the army would be withdrawn; there would be no discrimination against union members; negotiations would be resumed immediately, and wage increases would be retroactive to May 1.

Through Mayor Bowron, they were informed that the provisions were okay. They packed into automobiles and toured in caravan through downtown Los Angeles announcing they were returning to work. The entire night shift was accompanied to the army outposts.

The day shift went in Wednesday morning, June 11. They found they had been given another doublecross. Colonel Branshaw made the returning workers sign a notice over his signature that none of the strikers' provisions had been agreed upon and that they could go to work on that basis or quit. The eight men of the bargaining committee were "suspended pending investigation" by Colonel Branshaw, and Frankensteen announced that he was placing Walter Smethurst in charge of Local 683 until a "democratic" election of new local officers could be conducted. Smethurst, he said, would reenroll North American men into the local.

As Wyndham Mortimer, grey-haired veteran of the Flint sitdown strikes in auto and one of the five international UAW representatives fired by Frankensteen, told the North American strikers before they went back in:

"We have military dictatorship now at North American and we will have to submit to it until we get all of the labor movement behind us. But remember, it isn't the guy that wins the first battle that wins the war—it's the guy that wins the last battle."

JACK YOUNG.

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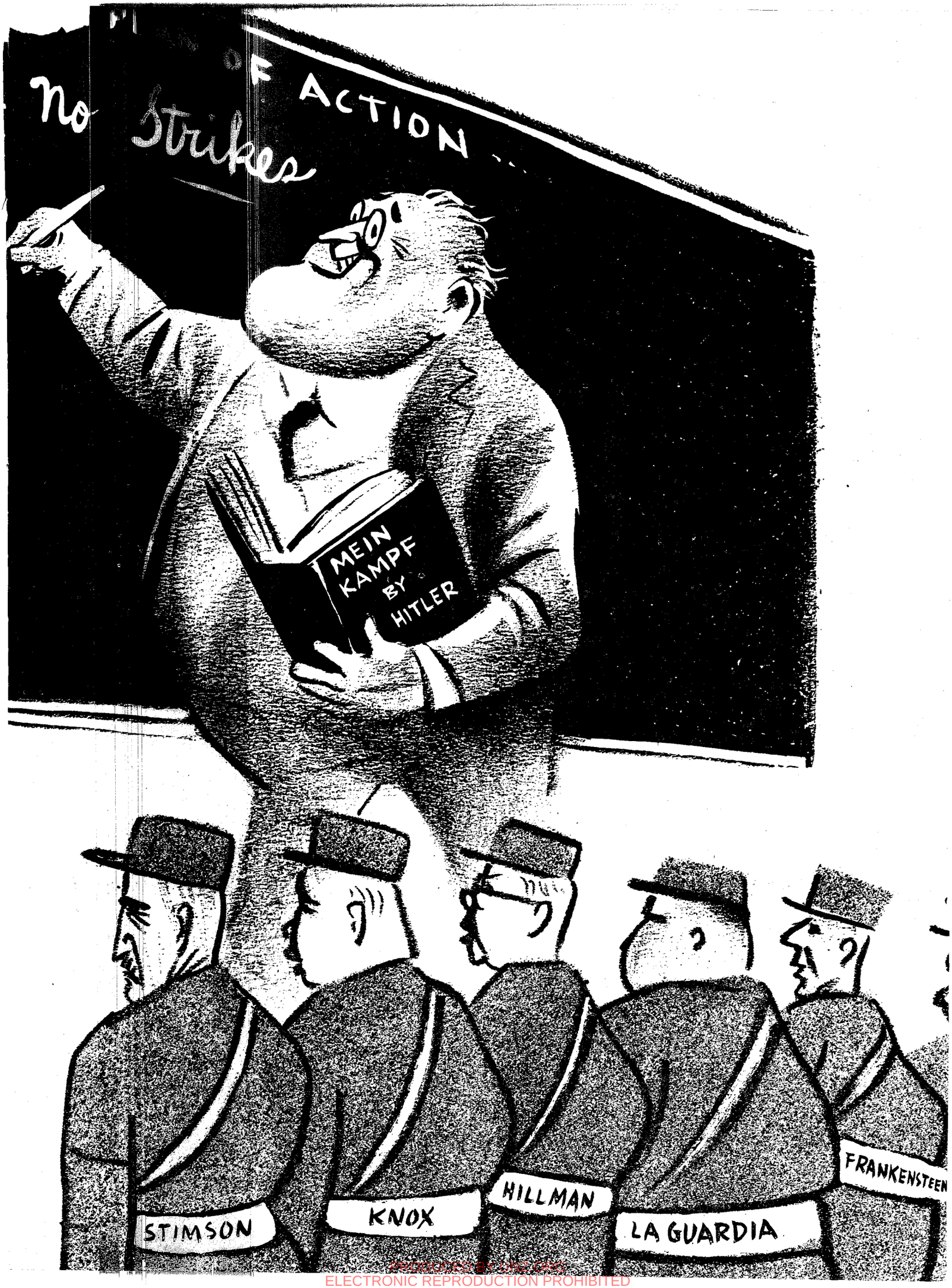

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RALPH GRAY: ALABAMA HERO

It was in July, ten years ago, they murdered him for bringing the union to the sharecroppers. Many others have sprung up to take his place and continue his fight.

"My young uns is watchin' the roads," Uncle Sam Flanders told us, "y'all got a clear way." So the three of us came up out of the swamp path and hoisted ourselves through the rear window into Tom's home, to the accompaniment of the sad, heavy strains of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Music welling up out of misery, bathing the wounds of bitterness.

My shin cracked against the solid, cast-iron wood stove which stood in the room as I stumbled behind Tom toward the cracks of light which shone past the ill-fitted door.

This was queer music straining up through the low rafters of the cabin, filling every corner of the two rooms, every crevice chunked with clay of the log walls. It was an organ being played with easy, agile fingers.

Mary Jane Scott looked up at us, breathed deeply, and smiled as we pushed into the room, but the playing didn't stop. Her breast rose and fell with the exertion as her bare, brown legs pumped up and down, and the wheeze of the instrument formed a labored undertone to the smooth rise and fall of the notes.

Mary Jane, I learned later, had gone to Tuskeegee and later, had played this organ in the church. It had been the only Negro church in the county to have an organ, and Mary Jane's father had got it for them from a mail order house when he got part of the money on his soldier's bonus. The church house leaked, though, and the organ had been carted over here in a wagon to be kept for six or eight weeks till the members got a chance to do the necessary repairs.

It had been cool walking and I made for the fire, where an old man sat silent on a stool, his elbows resting on shaky knees. His face, reminding you of a dried and wrinkled apple, was thrust forward on his gnarled neck toward the warmth.

The playing ceased, a final, dry wheeze sighed away, and, though I had my back turned, I knew Tom and Mary Jane were in each others' arms. When man and wife, young folks both, must see each other only for snatches during brief, hurried nights, each moment must contain so much more than their words to each other can possibly say. It has been three weeks now like this, Tom slipping into his own home such like, with comrades watching the roads for the law. They've come for him a half dozen times, and who can tell when they'll come again?

"There," the apple-faced old one says looking at me, rising testily to his feet. "There," he says. "I been a-wishin' I could set eyes on y'all." And an expression of comfort and gratified joy spreads through the deep lines of his face, softening his mouth and the drawn up wrinkles about his eyes.

"I wanted to shake yore hand, son; wanted to tell you how we old colored folks loves y'all. . . ." We stand there, my hand in his, neither of us quite knowing what more can be said. My eyes burn, and we both draw up stools, sit before the fire, and listen to the undertone of talk, punctuated by periodic silences, from the other end of the room, where Tom and Mary Jane sit together.

Off in the corner, the white, stuffed oblong of a high, old bedstead is half discernible, but it startles me a bit when a new voice comes from that direction. "Pap," it says, "Bring that new white folks brother hyar t'me."

At the bed in the dark corner her face is just a dark irregular oval against the pillow, and her hand is boney and dry in mine. "I allus knew God was goin' to send someone to wake our sorry folks up," she told me, and again I was torn with an odd feeling such as comes over you when people trust you with no reservation, believe in you more, perhaps, than you can believe in yourself.

We all of us drew up about the fireplace and the tobacco sack went from hand to hand. Three of us rolled our cigarettes in silence, lit up by the glowing end of a stick drawn from the fire. The old one took the membership books we had been making out with new names, and laid them carefully under the board where they were to remain until needed. It would be some time yet before we started out.

"It's been a long time since they tried to break the Union at Camp Hill," I thought, leaning toward the pine knot fire. "And there's about ten members to every one then." I said it aloud.

"Ralph would sure like it to be here right now," one said, and his far-away eyes looked down through the wide cracks in the floor.

Somewhere in Talapoosa County, Alabama, Ralph Gray's body lies buried in the red clay soil. His folks, his fellow-croppers don't know where. But wherever you go in the Alabama Black Belt, there are living stories about him. Not so gigantic and Herculean as John Henry, his legend dwells closer to these people, carries more hope, real hope.

You may hear these stories sometime, but like as not, you won't. They are of those tales that are not told casually, but harbored somewhere deep inside a people—his people—to be repeated to each child as he or she comes of age, or to be told again around a fire where only friends may gather. Told reverently, as one speaks of holy things.

Unions are made by men and women. Unions *are* men and women, people, working people, banded together in a struggle which means to them food for themselves and their children, which is to them life or death. Because death comes riding in the form of landlords, lynch gangs, and sheriff's posses. But it cannot stop this struggle. They have known lynch gangs too long now, have faced the sort of murder that you are shackled to with chain gang shackles, have felt death crawling up on them in the long, back-breaking days picking cotton with the belly empty.

Ralph Gray knew this. These were the things he talked of to his friends when they met around a smoking oil lamp to start off the union. These were the things he thought of as he tramped the dusty miles from one cabin to the other, "a-settin' up locals of the Society," maybe looking up as he walked, away from his torn shoes and toward the stars and the moon, whose light glinted on the barrel of the old rifle he carried.

They weren't very many, then. No loud voices blazoned the news, there were no bells, no noise. Quietly the union was formed and quietly it grew. It grew from the needs of the people, from the calloused palms of their hands. From "can see to can't see," they toiled in the fields. Only after dark could they work for themselves. After dark the small groups gathered and the demands of the union traveled through fields and cabins.

"Let it stick where it is picked," they said. In other words—We will sell our own cotton, instead of its going directly from the fields to the landlord's barn.

They demanded cash and settlement instead of the landlord accounts of "deducts," which somehow seemed always to eat up the cropper's share, no matter how many bales he made.

They demanded the right to have their own gardens, a nine-month school for the children, and school buses for Negro children. They demanded the right to organize and strike, and freedom for the Scottsboro boys.

These words traveled and spread, from lip to lip. Sunday they were passed about between Sunday School and Prayer Meeting in the tiny churches that are as woebegone as the shacks whose occupants they serve for what there is of community life. Whispers began to reach the ears of the landlords.

"Those damned niggers!" they cursed. The topping insolence was surely that these were demands—since when may "damned nigger slaves" *demand!*

Since the union was born.

That was the answer. "They took on over it somethin' destructious," Uncle Sam remarked. They had stormed and blustered, threatened and wheedled and cajoled. And they had ridden the quiet, side roads at night, through the fields of ripening cotton, looking for cabin lights or men out after dark. "What right business'd a nigra have out moseyin' round after sundown. Now, you know yourself—"

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"We couldn't worst oursefs, much," Jim says and he gets that look back in his great, dreamy brown eyes like he's seeing again the diffuse touch of an easy moon on the silvered white bolls that are now filling all the world as they stretch away from both sides of the unfenced road.

A body gets a feel for those fields of popping, bursting, growing, *alive now* cotton and you love it, I guess.

You love, too, that gaunt earth that's always there beside you. Scarred, yes, and maybe not so full of rich, promising life as once. But you see the beauties that once were there, that still are there though worn with toil, frayed and torn here and there. It's a faith, perhaps, like the faith you have in persons whose solid qualities you know behind the surface patched overalls or faded dress. This good red earth *has* produced a world's cotton. Can still produce. Does. There it is, bursting out of the long, dark rows of bushes in the moonlight, spreading like endless, rolling waters from the narrow, unditched road.

Walking, a man's feet go quiet in the thick, night-cool dust. The feel of it is easy and soft between the toes.

Other men curse its clinging lightness on trousers, its tenacious creeping over shoe tops and seeping through damp socks and on into the skin. It was night when they came down upon the meeting in a thicket near Camp Hill, Ala. It was a clear night in July, just before the picking. Their guns blazed out, "Death to the croppers! Death to the union!" Then they fled.

It was not entirely unexpected, of course. That their fusillade did not strike down men at that time is a credit neither to their intentions nor their steady aim. They fled to gather numbers—landlords, riding bosses, politicians.

Armed well and in high-powered cars, three hundred odd were gathered to ride terror through the countryside of two counties. Out "to throw the fear o'Gawd into those damned niggers," broadsides were fired into cabins as they passed. It was "open season," with all bars down, for pot shots or beatings for any black man caught out. Cabins were raided, furniture and closets torn up in frantic searches for "evidence."

Tramping through it all were the leaders of the union, slipping from cabin to cabin, warning, hiding literature, getting word around of the next meeting to plan the croppers' answer to the terror, strengthening the organization in the face of it all.

Late into the night Ralph Gray walked his rounds. Weary he surely must have been not to have seen them coming. Suddenly a volley of landlord shots blazed at him, and he fell, both legs broken. Lying there, he returned the fire and routed the "brave" night riders, one of their number wounded.

Fellow croppers found Gray, took him to a cabin and tried to get a doctor. The doctor refused to come. Instead the lynch gangs mobilized to surround the cabin.

"We done got tired of lynching," one of the men told me who had carried Ralph Gray home that night, his legs hanging limp from the knees. "I had me a forty-five and my old army rifle, but couldn't scare up more than seven shots for the pistol and just three for the gun."

John Moore, young, smooth-faced, and sullen, spoke softly, never smiling. He had come into the little room while we were talking, unbuttoned his sheepskin jacket, and pulled the tails of his grey shirt out until the flannel hung down outside his trousers. There was an air of tranquillity about him and all that he did, a certain restrained poise which could not be hurried. Then he started pulling packets of leaflets from under his belt.

"Here they are," he said.

He sat down and gravely bit off a sizeable piece of plug tobacco. I leaned over and put my eye to the rip in the newspaper tacked over the window. Soon we would start.

First, we mapped the program for the night; then Moore took up the story where it had been left on his entrance. It was always this way. Whatever I heard of the past, whatever tales there ever were, I remember them woven between the day to day, the hour to hour problems and work. Ralph Gray's life was like that, and it is perhaps fitting that he is remembered that way, never separate from those little things which go to make up "the union."

"Mighty nigh thirty of us come over then," Moore went on, picking up the story where Ralph was lying on his bed, wounded. "We sorta figured the law'd come back after him, but we didn't aim to let it go at that.

"Well, they come. Some was inside with Ralph, but most of us was out scattered around. I squatted out behind a bush.

"I hadn't been in the union long," Moore explained. "So maybe we didn't do things just like we should and ought. Been less than a week I'd joined up then.

"Very first meetin' I was at, they come in on us, and it wasn't but the next night they shot Ralph down. Mighty few of us had proper shot. First off, most hadn't money to buy with.

"Then that day I went in to the store to get some cartridges, they wouldn't sell me a one. Had the cash money right out in my hand, howsomever.

"'Ain't you running a store no longer?' I ast Mister Maynard, that has the store in town.

" 'All out of cartridges,' says he.

"There they were, big as life, stacked up on the shelf, so I pointed right to 'em. 'What's all those?' I wanted to know right out.

"When I look back from them there shelves, by damnee if he hadn't pulled a forty-five from under his table there and was holdin' it right easy, with his finger laying on the trigger.

"'Listen here, John,' he said to me, 'You ain't had no trouble yit and you don't want to have none. Them cartridges is for my own pus'nal use.' "

You could see the straight, athletic, brown-skinned Negro standing straight there in the

Dayspring

What of the night?
The stars are fastened
in their old place, tight and glistening;
the earth is pinned
with its old pin;
the moon's in place,
half dark, half bright.

So far so good.
What of the night?
The lights work
if you press the switch,
the poor are poor,
the rich are rich.
As for God,
that's as you prefer;
the sick child groans,
death throttles her.
The sleeper turns
from left to right;

the world spins over.
What of the night?

Ask in the subways
how many seats
give you a place for your head
and one for your feet.
Sleep in the middle
on your belly sits,
telling it lies about
how full it is.
Ask the grass
how you make your bed,
what newspapers keep
the light from your head:

Not so good.
What of the night?
Why, they take gas,
they take to drink,
they sleep on the grass,
they wake and think.
The wars can go on
Just as well as in daylight,
the searchlights manage it.
This is progress;
if you have doubt,
better banish it;
for safety keep
to prudent sleep.

What of the night?
Nothing very much.
The rich hold tight
with a nervous clutch.
The poor let life go
by inches; death
does a good business
sucking up breath
and exploiting heartbreaks.
The sound you hear
is the noise that pain makes.
Nothing very much
to report of the night.
Only, eastward,
Notice the light.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

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dingy interior of the unassorted helterskelter which characterizes such stores, looking hard and defiant at the sallow white whose unshaven jaw wagged nervously as he held the revolver before him.

"I've known you sence you picked my cotton as a boy, John, and I ain't aimin' for you to get in no bad trouble, but ever sence you come back from the Army you been too Gawd damn good fer a black man to be in this hyer county," the storekeeper continued, working himself into a trembling rage, his face flushing a deep hue. "Now you gowan off home and keep yore damned hide there 'fore I show you how to do it!"

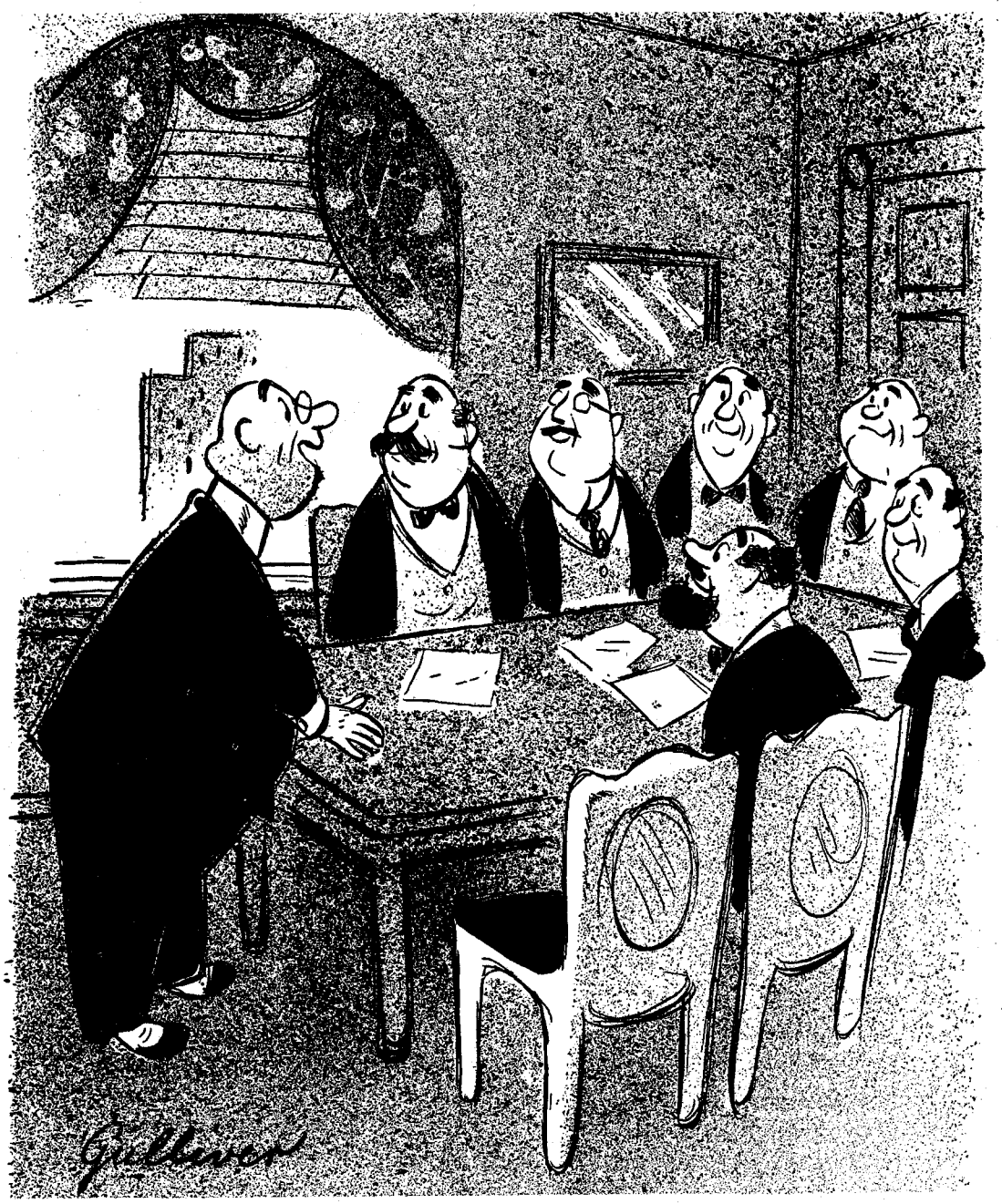
For a moment the accumulated explosive of days, of years, teetered on the brink of catastrophe. John Moore stood there, his lithe body swaying just a trifle toward the bare counter, his muscles tensing. Then the fuse sputtered and went out.

"G'wan now, you act right and you'll get treated right," Maynard said, a plaintive whine creeping into his voice. "You know I allus have treated you right, John. G'wan home, now."

So he had just seven bullets in his pistol and three for the rifle which had been put into his hands at first to, so he was told, slay the foes of liberty, equality, democracy. Well?

Crouched behind the bush beside Ralph Gray's tiny cabin, he shot at the dark hulks of the cars which came. How he escaped the armed posses that night is still a mystery.

"When they wasn't no more shot, I just ducked out and beat it. They wasn't nothing else I could do right then," he said, and that was all. Later they took his rifle out of his house while he was away, but the revolver he still has hidden in a safe spot and somehow he got a friend in Birmingham to buy two boxes of shells for him. How he got them into the county, with no money for such trips, the mails constantly being watched, and no aid from the channels of the organization, I don't know. I asked, and he smiled fleetingly —the only time I ever saw him smile—that was all.



"Gentlemen, as a far sighted corporation, I propose we send a representative to Dakar."

They murdered Ralph Gray as he lay wounded on his bed.

The echoes of that struggle traveled far and wide. Six were known killed in the reign of terror and destruction, forty croppers were arrested. But the nine hundred odd members of the rapidly growing Share Croppers Union were not alone. From all over the South came workers' protests. From widely separated sections of the country other workers waited for news of their heroic fellow-toilers in Talapoosa County, Alabama, and sent letters and telegrams of support, protests to the landlord officials. It is a great tribute to this solidarity, as well as to the staunchness of the union croppers in the struggle, that all those arrested, were later released.

Since that time, ten years ago, other groups in other places were formed. They won strike struggles, small victories, larger ones. Sometimes, too, there were losses, setbacks. But throughout the South, throughout the nation, the union influence spread. A new, a greater, united organization was formed. The Share Croppers Union became part of it, flesh of it, bone of it, blood of it.

New Ralph Grays have sprung up in the conflict. On plantations where one dollar a day for cotton-chopping was first won in a strike led by the union, they will say, "Ralph Gray gave us life to gain us our dollar."

I have sat on an old box, drawn up to a bare board table, while a cropper thanked his God for enabling him to fight for the corn bread, fat back meat, and gravy we were to eat. "Bless Ralph Gray in Heaven, dear God," he prayed, "and help us to have his strength.

"And bless the union. Amen."

To those who believe that the Civil War abolished slavery, and that there are certain elementary rights which all human beings in the United States enjoy, it is hard to believe that someone should be murdered by the "forces of law and order," because he dared start to organize a union. Without having seen the poverty-stricken cotton country, the clapboard shacks being eaten away by the weather and dried up by the fierce sun, leaning awry, it is sometimes hard to realize the terrible need for a union—a fighting union, strong and unafraid.

Some veterans of that Camp Hill struggle I know, still working and fighting to build their union, to wrest the right to live for themselves from the hands of the landlords.

In a small cabin in the heart of Talapoosa County, I sat and listened to singing. There was a deep happiness in the song, a happiness which comes from faith in your own strength, hope in a future you are fighting to make, and a comradeship which cannot be broken.

Give me that new union spirit,
Give me that new union spirit,
Give me that new union spirit,
It's good enough for me.

It was good enough for Ralph Gray,
It was good enough for Ralph Gray,
It was good enough for Ralph Gray,
And it's good enough for me.

BLAINE OWEN.

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TRONA IN THE DESERT

They work on the West Coast but their pay envelopes are controlled in London and Berlin. Mr. Knudsen helps Lord Halifax evade the law. Fifteen weeks of strike in a temperature of 110 degrees.

Trona, Calif.

THE spirit of the struck potash town of Trona—high in the Mojave desert—has not wilted despite 110 degrees of summer heat and thirteen weeks of strike.

The struck company carries the word "American" in its name—American Potash & Chemical Corp.—but it is owned by Gold Fields American Development Co., a subsidiary of Gold Field Ltd. of South Africa and 49 Moorgate, London. More than that—behind the John Bull face of "American Potash &" lurks the familiar shadow of combined Nazi-British finance friendship. The war may have demolished much of Europe, but it has not ruffled the close and peaceful friendship of British and Nazi capital in the common exploitation of American workers.

Several days ago Reid Robinson, president of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, CIO, emphasized to OPM officials in Washington that "joint Nazi-British corporate interests control American Potash and Chemical which still refuses to meet demands of American workers on strike. . . ."

About the only thing truly American in Trona, besides the desert itself, is the working population. German, Polish, Irish, English, Mexican, and French Americans—they came to Trona from Maine and Pennsylvania and Alabama and Oklahoma to eke out a living in this desert fastness that flies the British jack. Many of them had to leave their families in Los Angeles, 200 miles away, because there aren't enough company houses to go around in Trona. Many are squatting in huts and trailers out in the desert beyond the town, paying the Crown a cent a gallon for their American drinking water.

The spirit of striking Trona was well emphasized at a recent meeting of the union, the Alkaline Salt Workers Local 414 of the Mine, Mill and Smelters. A lone protagonist of a "Back to Work" movement didn't get to first base. One by one the strikers took the floor to say in fifty different ways, "We're sticking till the company comes to terms." Those terms are: decent wages and housing, the closed shop and preferential hiring, provision for conscriptees, abolition of the scrip system, and an end to racial discrimination.

The company can well afford to meet these demands. Its $20,000,000 Trona plant is now the largest operating potash plant in the world. Since the war started, it has become the foremost producer of such chemicals as potash, borax, boric acid, soda ash, salt cake, lithium, and bromine. It stands in the Mojave desert on the edge of a salt lake that evaporated thousands of years ago, leaving a crusted alkaline bed rich with mineral wealth. In 1939 alone the Trona plant paid a dividend of $6.55 a share on its 528,000 shares, which are owned by a handful of stockholders. Workers do not know just how much additional profit the two war years have brought.

On March 12, the big potash company ceased operating for the first time in its history. After a 96.4 percent strike vote, the workers flushed out the plant to prevent damage to the complicated machinery and walked out. But the background of this strike goes back many years.

In 1936 four union leaders of the then AFL local at Trona were fired for presuming to organize the workers. Among those four was "Pop" Harry Hardy, now on the negotiating committee in this strike and a member of Local 414's executive board. Mass firings followed the original four discharges, but the Trona workers went on organizing, scorning the "popsicle" company union. After the Supreme Court upheld the Wagner act, the NLRB ordered reinstatement of the fired workers, with back pay. But British Gold Fields Ltd. did not feel bound by United States law. The case dragged through the courts for three years before the workers were reinstated in August 1940.

SINCE LAST DECEMBER 18, when Local 414 was certified by the NLRB as the collective bargaining agent for Trona, the union has tried to get a contract embodying the demands listed above. But company representatives evaded all the important issues. So the mountain moved—Trona workers struck. Now union policemen patrol the company town, control traffic, and keep strict order. For the first time in their lives company stooges are learning to obey rules which protect the majority.

The union originally asked for a $1.05 minimum hour wage, but has come down to ninety-five cents. The pre-strike minimum was 67½ cents an hour for "white" workers, 62½ cents for Mexicans. Five distinct wage classifications made for a caste system which is reflected even in the workers' housing. Jesus Quezada, a Mexican boy who has been in Trona for fourteen years, showed me the home he shares with ten other human beings. It has only one bedroom. As Mexicans, Jesus and his brothers are barred from jobs that pay more than 62½ cents an hour. His sisters may not even apply for office jobs in the Trona plant. The family is confined to "Mexico Town," a row of shacks and bunk houses across the tracks. Jesus is very thin.

He works hard and goes to school two days out of every week, taking the bus to the nearest high school forty miles away. He is all for the union.

I visited a Mexican "bachelor quarters." The double rooms are so small the men can't even bring their trunks inside. A curiously constructed cooling system is attached to the window—a home-made affair of straw and dripping water and an electric fan. Trona's average temperature seven months of the year is 105 degrees, and 120 degrees is not unknown. Sixteen men share a shoddy bathroom with an antique shower, one toilet, and a broken washstand. The company has openly admitted a shortage of 321 dwellings to meet the workers' housing needs. Since the strike began, 106 new houses are in process of construction. Even the best of them consist of only one bedroom—no matter how large the family—and a living room and kitchen.

Prices at Trona are thirty-five percent higher than in Los Angeles. For this is a company town, with company prices, and the community's isolation makes the cost-of-living problem tougher. Oranges are thirty-five cents a dozen, milk is thirteen cents a quart, and all nickel drinks sell for a dime. The women say that butter and meat are altogether prohibitive at Trona prices. Supplies for the strike kitchen are being bought once a week at Riverside or San "Berdoo." The Women's Auxiliary, which grew overnight from fifty to 100 members, operates a soup kitchen which feeds some 500 persons a day in a big tent purchased from a circus outfit down in Long Beach. And the strikers' wives aren't the only women who are backing unionization. All of the pretty waitresses in Trona's company-leased coffee shop proudly wear CIO buttons.

When the strike was only a month old, Washington's Office of Production Management stepped in and certified it, projecting the "defense" angle at Trona. The company, whose impressive silence on the "defense" plea was no doubt influenced by a desire for anonymity—in view not only of the Nazi interest in Trona but of the large war orders from Japan—has itself prolonged the strike by refusing to accept a settlement proposal made by the National Defense Mediation Board and accepted by Local 414. It has been content to allow the Dies committee to conduct the open attack upon the strikers and the union's president, Reid Robinson.

Meanwhile, Trona workers' reply to the British-Nazi corporation, as well as to the Dies committee and OPM, remains the same as thirteen weeks ago when they first went out: the strike will hold solid until "Adolph-Bull" comes through with the modest demands of the union.

BETH MCHENRY.

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CARL BRISTEL

★

Nearer and Nearer

THE President continues to implement his unlimited national emergency with a series of measures which represent nothing very new and have actually long been prepared in advance. Evidently the administration is worried by the lag in the popular interest about the emergency, and wishes to instill a sense of continuing, impending crisis in every afternoon's headlines. Last week, complete governmental control was established over foreign exchange dealings with the German and Italian governments and their nationals as well as all other nationals and governments under Axis control. All funds and investments in this country were frozen. On top of that a number of European countries, such as Sweden, Spain, Finland, and the Soviet Union will now have to submit their foreign exchange transactions to the special scrutiny of Treasury officials, presumably so that no American dollars get through to Hitler. Most observers agree that this decree will have little practical effect on Germany and Italy. For more than a year they have been collecting on investments in this country, and by dummy corporations of Latin-American registry siphoning out substantial sums in American money for use in world trade. By now most of this trade has been exhausted; "The barn is empty," as Morgenthau himself remarked at a press conference on June 2. So also the reprisals in Rome and Berlin do not have much meaning, since American investments in those countries have really been frozen for five or six years. But the Treasury has nevertheless gained an important and long-sought power over exchange transactions.

It is significant that the Soviet Union has been included among those neutral countries whose exchange transactions are not barred, but subject to special license. The authorities are trying to prevent indirect trade operations to Germany's advantage. Such operations may be taking place through Spain or Finland, but the USSR has specifically denied that any of its goods are bought in the United States for trans-shipment to Germany. And yet, Japan, an avowed Hitlerian partner, has not been subject to these regulations at all. The conclusion is inescapable that the administration has chosen this way of deliberately insulting the USSR and hampering its trade with us, at the same time extending an olive branch to Japan. All of this is in line with the continued shipments of lubricating oils and gasoline to Tokyo in spite of the fact that the eastern seaboard faces a gasoline shortage because tankers are bringing the fuel to southern New Jersey ports for trans-shipment to Japan. All of this strengthens the rumors that serious negotiations are under way between Washington and Tokyo for some kind of deal.

The investigation of the *Robin Moor* incident is due by the end of the week. It may be true that the ship was not carrying munitions, although there were more than one hundred cases of "buck shot" aboard, but undoubtedly it was carrying all sorts of materials for Britain; the Nazis have been clever enough to point out that the ship was carrying iron rails, which the British themselves consider contraband. Public reaction to the incident has been very very mild. A modern *Lusitania* affair which might arouse the nation, such as the administration so ardently desires, has not taken place. But the President will nevertheless try to make the most of the situation in the *Robin Moor* report, certainly hammering away at the "freedom of the seas." Some observers foresee the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany, to which the closing of the Nazi consulates is the prelude. Others even predict the arming of American merchantmen. This would wholly abandon every figleaf of neutrality. Wilson made that decision on March 12, 1917—three weeks before the declaration of war.

Overtime in the Rumor Mills

THE dilemmas plaguing the imperialists grow more troublesome with each passing week. This period—the period of capitalist disintegration—confronts the ruling classes of all countries with problems increasingly difficult to cope with in the framework of the profit system. Just such a dilemma has been obsessing the Churchill government. Certainly the military situation, after the routs in Greece and Crete, is not conducive to spreading confidence among the British people. Increasingly, the Prime Minister must face angry criticisms and questions as to what the government plans to do next in this war of untold suffering. Increasingly, the government is challenged by demands for improved relations with the Soviet Union, for a clear explanation of the Hess "mission," for an exact definition of British war aims, for a statement on the outlook for peace.

To all these questions and more, the hard-pressed Churchill government thought it had found a splendid reply when its propaganda machine spread horrendous tales of an imminent German-Soviet clash. Such a story, it was expected, could well be made to serve the uncomfortable Cabinet. In Germany, it would again call the attention of the Hitler government to the fond British hope that this war could be resolved and transformed into another, more palatable war that would put an end to the risky struggle between the imperialists themselves. At home, it gave encouragement to the appeasers who would like an understanding with Germany before the British empire collapsed and before capitalism exhausted itself so thoroughly that it could no longer move against the USSR. Again, as an alternative, London played with the notion that the rumor would "awaken" Moscow to its own danger about which Churchill has recently expressed such concern; thereupon, the Soviet Union might be induced to abandon its policy of peace by plunging into the war as Britain's ally.

Useful as the rumor was designed to be, it also indicated the course of the British government's wishful thinking. Remember that a German-Soviet war is only conceivable if Germany first reached an understanding with Great Britain. And it is now generally agreed that Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland with a plan for "peace"—the kind of "peace" which could be made at the expense of socialism and the peoples of all countries. It is the "peace" conceived by Chamberlain, unattainable up to now. Once again, the capitalists revive the "solution" to all their troubles—the holy war.

Berlin was also not averse to spreading these rumors of an impending clash with the USSR. Is the intent to mask preparations for an attack on England, as some suggest? Or is it not more likely that the rumors can be useful inasmuch as they revive hopes in American ruling circles and thus impede plans for all-out war against Germany? Obviously, Germany has no desire to see the United States formally enter the war. And too, German use of the British rumor attests to the difficulties that the Nazis are experiencing. The German rulers also would like to end the war—on their terms. They do not relish the prospect of full American participation. And wars teach deep lessons to the masses at home and in conquered territory.

IN ADMITTING German concentrations along the Soviet-German border, the official Soviet news agency, Tass, pointed out clearly, and with its usual precision, that rumors of strained relations were being spread by the enemies of the Soviet Union. "Germany did not present any claims to the USSR and does not propose any new closer agreement," the Tass statement continued. "According to information at the disposal of the USSR, Germany abides by the provisions of the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression." How far rumor can go, and to what preposterous lengths, is apparent from a "dope story" dated Washington and authored by that old hand at concocting fables, Hallett Abend, which announces the possibility that the USSR will hand over to Japan "fifty destroyers, twenty submarines, fourteen mine layers, and 300 military planes." Wild tales like this one are transparent. But the Soviet Union is well aware that the dream of imperialism everywhere is somehow, some way to surmount contradictions that keep one capitalist nation at war with another, and somehow, some way to work out a scheme to turn the entire force of capitalism against the Soviet Union.

There remains one constant—and one only

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—in the maelstrom of international relations. That is the peace policy of the Soviet Union. It opposes the spread of war. It works for the liberation of all people. The USSR desires peace. But it will meet with the most powerful resistance any violation of Soviet integrity. And deterring Hitler, giving the lie to rumors of immediate invasion by Germany of the Ukraine, is the strength and tested power of the Red Army. The newspapers can predict to their heart's content; they cannot exorcise the reality of Soviet unity and Soviet might with dope stories from London, Berlin, and Washington.

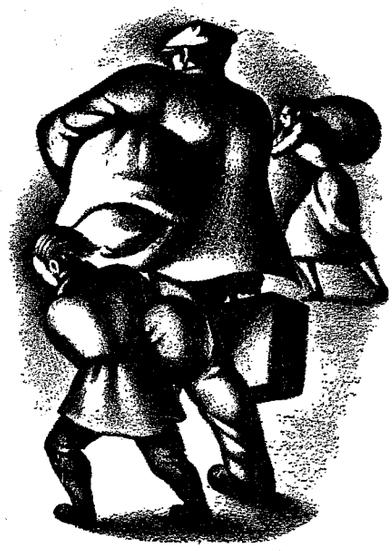
The Week in Syria

AFTER more than ten days of fighting in the legendary hills and valleys of Lebanon, the British invasion of Syria seems to have made definite progress. By the time these lines are read, Damascus may have fallen, with the major Mediterranean port of Beirut threatened. But this advance has been costly. The early notion that occupying Syria would be a mere triumphal procession, with substantial Vichy forces going over to the de Gaullist banner, has now given way. The fighting north of the Damascus-Beirut line will probably be extended. The French have prepared well, fortified every defensive hillside and cliff overhanging strategic roads. The Vichy air force is active and seems to be getting reinforcements from the continent while French naval units are challenging British vessels off the Lebanese shore. Indirect aid is also coming in the form of German air attacks on the Palestinian port of Haifa. But the British have the initiative, plus bases of operations to the east and south. Their strategy seems to involve slicing off sections of southern and central Syria thus forcing the French units northwards, where they must soon enter neutral soil in Turkey.

More sensitive correspondents like Russell Hill of the New York *Herald Tribune* have already noted some "strange" aspects of the war. For one thing it is being carried on by very motley fighting forces on both sides: the Vichy French have their Foreign Legionnaires plus Senegalese and remnants of Weygand's old Near Eastern army which was to have been used against the USSR last year. The British have a collection of Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, and substantial Indian troops. It is indeed a strange "democracy" these troops are fighting for, especially since the soil they are fighting on belongs to the Syrian people, who have long been struggling to regain it for themselves. The British are now espousing the cause of Syrian independence with a gay abandon, promising everything that the French imperialists refused. This also has its ironies. Independence must be a strange promise in the minds of the Palestinian Arabs a few miles to the south, or to the Iraqi Arabs who have just been "pacified" by British tanks and airplanes. One can only imagine what the people of India think as they observe Sir Anthony Eden falling all over himself to promise Syria independence, while using Indian troops to conquer that country, troops from that same India which the same Anthony Eden and his fellow Tories have so stubbornly denied independence.

Meanwhile the apparent inactivity of the Nazis seems puzzling. If one had believed all the British stories some weeks back of an imminent Nazi invasion of Syria, it would be even more puzzling that the Nazis are doing very little to prevent the British advance. Unquestionably, however, this region is a key one in their long-range calculations. It seems that the Nazis are pursuing a "heads I win tails you lose" policy, roughly analogous to their attitude when Mussolini invaded Greece. If the Darlan-Weygand crowd is capable of holding its colony, the Nazis reckon this will strengthen the idea that France is collaborating with Germany out of free will, having demonstrated as much by defending its "own" soil with its "own" troops. In this case, the German penetration for the larger Suez campaign can go forward on the heels of the British defeat. On the other hand, if the French imperialists lose out, they will have to rely more than ever on German arms; and if the Nazis have the strategic plans and material ability to take Suez, they probably believe they can push the British out of Syria anyway. Thus, we should expect the Nazis to wait and undertake their offensive when they think they can occupy the entire region into Egypt itself.

The British may have begun this operation for more than military reasons, of course, for more important motives than merely to place obstacles between their oil fields and the Nazi positions. By occupying Syria, which is Hitler's logical point of departure into Asia Minor other than Turkey itself, the British are playing an astute, dangerous game. If Hitler is coming into their empire at all, they probably prefer that he do that via the Dardenelles and Turkey. Britain still speculates that an impending violation of Turkey's neutrality would represent a setback for the Soviet Union, and might even provide the occasion for a real break in Soviet-German relations.



Blashko

WPA's Casualty List

LAST year it was the "war boom" that provided an excuse for cutting WPA appropriations. This year it's still the "war boom," although anyone who can read a newspaper knows that the booming is all being done in the financial reports of war corporations. Where the unemployed are concerned it is as far away as Hoover's prosperity around the corner. There are still some 9,000,000 jobless and thousands of them will be cut off from relief work if the WPA funds okayed by the House, with administration approval, are written into law. This is the lowest WPA appropriation on record—$875,000,000, or nearly a half-billion less than the meager 1940 allotment—reducing WPA rolls from 1,700,000 monthly to 941,315.

Nor is the war program likely to do really more for employment than it has during the past year. How can any significant reabsorption of the jobless take place under a program that cuts down "non-defense" production and concentrates war orders in a relatively small number of giant corporations? Furthermore, it is just these corporations which have made the most of technological substitutes for manpower (with the same number of workers, industrial production is twenty-five percent above 1929). Statistics aside, in human terms this deep slash of relief funds means that thousands more of America's families are being asked to nourish themselves on the "glorious spectacle" of an administration armed to its teeth, "ready to lick anybody"—with the tears, blood, and sweat of the people it professes to defend.

Bitter Fruit

THERE are two kinds of lynching; outright murder by night riders and "legal" frameups with the death sentence given out in the courtroom. Recently the two were combined. W. S. Cochran, Texas landlord, strode into the courtroom at Conroe and shot to death Robert White, a young Negro who was being tried on charges of "raping" Cochran's wife. The accused had been tried twice before and "found guilty" but the frameup was so obvious that the verdicts were reversed by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and the US Supreme Court. Cochran couldn't wait for a third verdict and possible reversal—he used the Hitler tactic most popular with Southern rulers. Then, after "giving himself up" to a prosecutor who shook his hand, he laid down $500 for bail and went home. And later this man who murdered in cold blood before a court full of witnesses was "tried," congratulated for his "daring" by the prosecuting attorney—and freed!

This is the sort of thing which the nonlabor press regards as a "good story" but not for editorial comment. Nor did the editors recall anything about lynching when they editorialized, a few days later, on Roosevelt's appointment of Sen. James Byrnes of South Carolina to the Supreme Court. Yet the President's "dear Jim" is one of the Senate's most prominent opponents of the Anti-Lynch-

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ing Bill. He is also one of its outstanding "White Supremacy" ranters, who has attacked the Negro press and fought federal appropriations that carried any benefits to Negroes. To elevate him to the nation's highest court is an action which says far more about the administration's "defense" policy toward Negroes than all of the President's statement politely asking war industrialists not to refuse jobs to Negroes. However, the statement does say some interesting things. It is an admission that Negroes *have* been barred from "defense" employment these many months—as progressives have pointed out all along. And the statement itself, weak as it is, shows that the protest against this discrimination has been strong enough to force the President at least to a verbal concession.

The truly positive, realistic statement on this subject comes from the National Negro Congress, supporting the July First Job March on Washington. It demands not only equal employment opportunities for Negroes but abolition of Jim Crow and the poll tax; passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill; the broadest unity of Negro and white people in the fight for Negro freedom; and staying out of the war in Europe.

Troubles South

ONE of the Roosevelt administration's major headaches in the effort to involve the country in all-out war is the continued resistance of the Latin American countries to the blandishments and threats of Yankee imperialism. After many months of negotiations and despite last year's Pan-American Conference at Havana, at which the United States had things pretty much its own way, the results are astonishingly small. In a recent issue of the New York *Times,* Harold Callender, after a survey of a number of South American countries, presents what the war party must regard as a very dismal picture. He writes that the United States is facing "a major South American crisis" because of the "progressively less neutral position of the United States" and because of "the widespread disinclination in South America to recognize" the need for war collaboration which President Roosevelt envisages. "In some quarters at least," he writes, "there is more fear of the United States than of Germany—fear that the United States, in the guise of defense, may extend its power too far south. . . ."

Callender tries to create the impression that this lack of enthusiasm for the Wall Street war effort is due to the fact that the South American governments are dominated by those who are not "the ideological friends" of the United States. He does not mention that those governments which show pro-Axis leanings, such as the Vargas dictatorship in Brazil, owe their existence in large part to the friendship, whether ideological or otherwise, of our State Department. But the picture Callender paints is fundamentally false. It is not the reactionary governments that constitute the obstacle to Yankee imperialism's plans. Certainly there is a section of the bourgeoisie in all Latin American countries that seeks genuine economic and political independence. But what the *Times* prefers to omit is the deep-seated hatred of the *masses* for the Guggenheims, Rockefellers, and all other vehicles of foreign domination. It is among the workers and peasants below the Rio Grande that the hemisphere imperialism of both the Roosevelt administration and the America First Committee leaders meets the stiffest resistance. An example is the setback which the Socialist Party of Chile, which favors aligning that country with the United States, suffered in the recent election, while the Radical and Communist Parties, which joined in an anti-imperialist front, registered important advances.

Dangerous Thoughts

THERE was a time, not long ago, when the American editor used to refer to the Japanese law of "dangerous thoughts" as an oddity that Ripley should record. No more. Today that law operates in the biggest city of our land; any honest democrat would have recognized it at the hearing of John K. Ackley, New York's City College registrar, before the Board of Higher Education. Mr. Ackley is first of thirty-two teachers to be tried on charges of Communist Party membership that grew out of the Rapp-Coudert witch hunt.

Typical of the hypocrisy in the case was the opening statement of Charles C. Weinstein, assistant corporation counsel: "We are not conducting a heresy trial or holding an inquisition into the purely personal lives of the defendants." Then he hastened to repudiate that assurance by questioning Mr. Ackley's reading habits: "Did you read Marx's works? Engels' works? What pamphlets do you have at home? When did you read the *Communist Manifesto?* Were the principles agreeable to you when you read it?" And other such "impersonal" questions. Indeed, how far the school heads have gone along the high road to fascism since Aug. 23, 1938, when Ordway Tead, chairman of the Board of Higher Education, declared that the political views of our faculty members "are not a matter which we inquire into in the first instance. Our concern is with the scholarship and integrity of our faculties." "Scholarship and integrity"—the words have a strange, outlandish sound in the raucous atmosphere of Rapp-Coudert.

For the slogan today is "conform to reaction—or else." And reaction crawls forward into the school system from half a dozen directions. Space does not permit presenting abundant proofs, but we refer you to the pamphlet *New York Schools Are Invaded,* issued by the Committee for Defense of Public Education. It states, and proves: The Coudert committee is shielding the pro-fascists and anti-Semites in the school system, and committee is serving the interests of those who seek to drastically reduce educational facilities and to Hitlerize the remains. Encouraging to progressives was the formation of a Continuations Committee, consisting of representatives of organizations that attended the fighting Conference on Anti-Semitic and Pro-Fascist Activities in the Public Schools and Colleges of New York City, June 10. only by such activities will the menace of fascism in our public schools be met.

Some More Old Men

THE sort of Supreme Court packing that President Roosevelt has just engaged in should suit the men who saw anarchy in 1937 when it was suggested that the Court's personnel could be improved in respect to liberalism. Of the two new appointments, Attorney General Jackson and Senator Byrnes of South Carolina, the latter is only more flagrantly reactionary. Byrnes, whose anti-Negro venom is discussed in another editorial, is a cunning machine politician. He was sometimes known as a New Dealer back in the days when there was a New Deal, but even then the senator from South Carolina only carried the administration ball when to do so was part of his own political game. At other times he fought progressive measures, including the Wagner act, WPA, and social security.

As for Jackson, he has become as famous as J. Edgar Hoover for persecution of the foreign born. Under his administration the Department of Justice has fingerprinted, registered, deported, and terrorized "aliens" with a zeal not equaled since the Palmer Raid days. In the labor field, he is best known at this moment for his characterization of the North American Aviation strike as "insurrection." Mr. Jackson, you will recall, also tried to break the strike at Vultee Aircraft last December, by counting "Reds" on the picket line. He as well as Byrnes can be trusted to carry out their White House chief's wishes in the increasing number of labor and civil-liberties cases which will be appealed to the Supreme Court in the near future. Harlan Fiske Stone, whom Mr. Roosevelt is promoting from Associate to Chief Justice, has a more liberal record than his associates in civil liberties decisions—but this has been nullified, of course, by his failure to speak up against the persecution of Earl Browder.

Imperialist Morality

WE clipped the following item from the New York *Times* of June 15. Mr. von Gibara is a member of the firm of Wolfgang von Gibara & Co., "one of the most active of Wall Street Houses in the business of helping American individuals and corporations to get assets out of Germany. . . ."

Asked about the possible fate of royalties and license fees paid by American companies for the use of German patents, Mr. von Gibara said he imagined the American Government would work out some such arrangement as that which now exists between Germany and Britain. Those countries, he said, may be fighting a war, but they have consistently allowed royalties on patents to be transferred to each other through indirect channels evei since the start of the war.

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Readers Forum

Where Does Franco Stand?

TO NEW MASSES: Cesar Falcon's article, "Franco Walks the Tightrope," in the May 6 issue of NEW MASSES, repeats a thesis which he advanced in your pages about a year ago. Spain, he maintains, is not in the Axis camp but in that of Britain. In his earlier article he supported this surprising contention with allegations of fact that have not been corroborated. In the present article there are no supporting facts at all.

You published another article on Spain about a year ago in which it was argued that the Franco regime was a helpless prisoner of the Axis and that so long as it did not actively participate in the war, it performed another useful function for the Axis. That is, it acted as an importing agent of Anglo-American war materials.

One or the other of these two opposite contentions had to be true and one false. Yet now we have a repetition of last year's confusion. A recent issue of the National Maritime Union's official organ published a documented account of trade with Spain, in British bottoms, actually bringing Anglo-American-controlled copper and gasoline to Germany. This account, I understand, was widely republished in the labor press. But now comes Falcon re-asserting "partial and indirect collaboration with British imperialism" as "Spain's dominant policy." If there were facts supporting these two contradictory views, publication of "both sides of the question" would serve a useful purpose. But as I remarked before, there are no facts to support the view that Spain collaborates with Britain.

The Spanish government says it is pro-Axis and announces a program of territorial aggrandizement at the expense of British interests: Gibraltar, Oran, all of Morocco, much of British West Africa down to the Niger. The papers constantly print credible accounts of growing German physical control of Spain.

Falcon's argument is that British sea control constitutes a greater military threat to Spain than German land forces can offer and that the British blockade can also starve Spain. All this proves that Franco feels pressures from both sides. It in no way shows what policy the Spanish government has adopted in the face of the pressures. Nor can Anglo-American purchase of Argentine wheat for Spain show Spain's trend; it shows only the trend of Washington and London, forlornly to pay bribes in the ancient spirit of appeasement, hoping against hope to buy Spanish neutrality. They cling to the hope all the longer in that it permits continuance of a profitable trade with a market otherwise hard to reach: Germany. As recently as May 2, Serrano Suner repeated (in the muddy language of Spanish fascism), that Spain was a part of the "New Order" and will do what the said order dictates. "Spain [says Suner] from its own free will has mapped out a policy which follows a path that at the same time is in keeping with the supreme requirements of our national interest for a European country and the imperatives of our gratitude and our honor toward friendly countries." Britain and America were not cited as "friendly countries" but denounced as "pluto-democracies" standing in Spain's path.

I hope, therefore, that NEW MASSES will publish no more unsupported assertions that run counter not only to "surface appearances" but to every assumption on which progressives based their reasoning during and since the Spanish war. If there are new facts, good; let us have them. If not, let us not introduce confusion into a complicated picture. The very instability of the Franco regime presses it toward imperialist adventures in which it comes into active conflict with Anglo-American imperialist interests. All the "surface" facts say Spain is consciously responding to this basic pressure. Then why should we tell people that Franco, by deliberately playing one side against the other, even today "preserves his delicate balance"? He is, rather, delicately balanced between Hitler's thumb and forefinger.

New York City. EDWARD RYAN.

[Justice is on Mr. Ryan's side when he complains that Cesar Falcon did not present enough evidence to prove that Spain's foreign policy continues to be a "partial and indirect collaboration with British imperialism." He is also justified when he points out that Falcon's two articles within the last year contradict, in the main, the viewpoint of other published material on the same subject. One of the reasons for our failure to clarify the question lies in the fact that Falcon, a distinguished journalist of republican Spain, is thousands of miles away; intimate editorial collaboration has been impossible. For another thing, we have considered the precise formulation of Spain's position an open question, subject to debate and disagreement. Mr. Ryan is right when he complains of this anomalous situation. We believe, however, that he hasn't got the full answer, and gives us no more than an able oversimplification when he says that Franco is "delicately balanced between Hitler's thumb and forefinger."

Here's how we look at it: the outstanding fact about Spain's internal and external policies is that they are the product of extreme conflict among the ruling cliques, from monarchists to falangists, within the country, and among the major, and even the lesser imperialisms, outside of the country. This conflict is magnified since it takes place against a background of concealed civil war: no matter what their calculations every group and every power must reckon with the open hostility of the Spanish masses. Economically, there is no doubt that Germany, and especially Italy, have been the chief beneficiaries of the defeat of the republic: their capitalists are squeezing the wealth of Spain's groves, fields, and mines, beyond question. One reason is that the Anglo-American bloc has much less need of Spain's raw materials. To a certain extent, also, the British and American capitalists are content to draw dividends from the production of goods in Spain even if the goods go to their "enemies": that is no new phenomenon. The Anglo-American policy of trading with Franco, giving him food and credits, is dictated first by the fear of what would happen in Europe if Franco could no longer oppress the Spanish people; second, the Anglo-American bloc has long-range strategic calculations, involving the occupation of Spain's North African possessions, and even the use of Spanish soil for an ultimate invasion of the continent. Superficially, therefore, the German and Italian influence dominates. Contradictory factors will come to the surface only if Franco loses his grip, or if the Anglo-American bloc gains the initiative in the war.

In its external policies, the Spanish ruling cliques are equally torn apart, especially by their own impotence. Falcon aptly quotes Lenin's phrase that Spain's is a "tattered" imperialism. Immediately after the defeat of France, these imperialist ambitions flamed up in Madrid, ambitions at the expense of France, with vistas of expansion across the south Atlantic. But the reality is quite different, and in the last weeks, the French bourgeoisie has made it clear that the price of collaboration with Germany involves keeping both Mussolini and Franco out of the French empire. Moreover, Spain and its possessions are located at strategic crossroads, at the foci of the antagonisms of the major powers. To gain a foothold in Africa, Hitler must ultimately have the cooperation of Spain; to regain their initiative in the war and invade the continent, so must the Anglo-American bloc. And in this respect, the long-term advantages are on their side, just as the whole idea of gaining the initiative is a long-term project. By their whiphand in Portugal and by their seapower, the Anglo-American bloc is unquestionably in a position to make things very difficult for Franco, using the old monarchist tradition and the Social Democrats as counterfoils to Franco if necessary. In terms of a brief war, therefore, Hitler and Mussolini gain all the advantages of Spain's non-belligerence. In terms of a longer struggle, we think the advantage lies on the Anglo-American side, and in this sense, there is a basis for viewing Franco's policies as a partial cooperation with British imperialism.

Naturally, whether either side fulfills its expectations is another matter. The effort of the Spanish people to continue their war of liberation to final victory may bring about an even more open collaboration between the British and German imperialism than during the Spanish war itself. On the other hand, that action of the Spanish people may also coincide with revolutionary developments elsewhere in Europe, or initiate such developments, and thus contribute to a common victory of the people over both imperialisms.—The Editors.]

Britain's Railroad Workers

TO NEW MASSES: The enclosed letter just came to me from a friend of mine who is an old-time British railroad worker. I thought your readers might be interested in some of the things he writes:

"Dear—: One of the things that is a little hard on us older Northern England men is the hours that we now have to put in because of the emergency. Most of us have to be on the job seven days every week. Fortunately I don't work as a switchman, because those fellows are almost all doing twelve hours every single day.

"We haven't too much to complain about. The food is rationed, but then we all get our share. The only trouble is that we who work on the railroads are often away from home at times up to forty hours at a space, and too many times we can't buy a bit of food all the while. So we have to take our meals with us, which is sometimes hard, because the rations don't stretch so well when you have to make up a hamper for one of the family.

"But as I said we manage to get along. You can see how well from the fact that all the companies seem to be keeping out of the red, and someday maybe they will even give us a bob or two higher for our service. Of course, they haven't said they will as yet, and as yet all the times we have asked for it we have been put off. But then they are doing so awfully well, even better this last year than they did in 1937 that we can take cheer over the fact that surely they will want to pass some of it on. They haven't ever done so before, but you know they tell us that this war changes everything. All we have to do is wait for the change to come."

Peoria, Ill. P. L.

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THE TRAGEDY OF INDIA

R. Palme Dutt's brilliant Marxist work is final proof why Britain cannot be regarded as a democracy. A nation bursting its bonds. Profits, terror, and hunger.

INDIA TO-DAY, *by R. Palme Dutt. London, V. Gollancz, 1940.*

IN THE midst of the new tasks and pressing responsibilities which have fallen to him in the last year and a half, R. Palme Dutt has been able to complete and furnish us with a great Marxist work. His *India To-day* is of crucial significance because in this age of imperialism it gives us a comprehensive analysis of the pivot of modern imperialism, the most valuable colonial possession of all time. With an impressive mass of data gathered through long painstaking scholarship and illuminated by the floodlight of Marxist theory, Dutt is able to destroy the web of illusions, lies, and misinformation so carefully woven by generations of British apologists. But *India To-day* is much more than an exposure and indictment of British colonial rule set down for the record. It is a lesson as to the true character of imperialism, and a call for its final end.

Dutt begins by pointing out that, before the conquest by Britain, India was a leading manufacturing country with famous textiles and a flourishing agriculture. In terms of natural resources it is still potentially one of the richest areas of the globe. Yet contemporary India is sunk deep in poverty and misery. Three-quarters of its people live at or below the barest minimum of subsistence, under conditions beyond the imagination of those accustomed to American standards.

Dutt finds the secret of India's poverty in the character of British imperialism. With overpowering documentation from official British sources he proves conclusively that *at every period in the history of British rule, the wealth, the resources, and the manpower of India have been sacrificed to the interests of the ruling classes of Great Britain.* In the age of merchant capitalism, the original East India Company, a small group of traders scrambled to increase profits from the export to Europe of fine Indian textiles. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Mogul Empire in India had crumbled; the ambitious East India Company started its career of territorial conquest by appropriating the richest province, Bengal. Once in control, the British proceeded to extort vast sums in cash from the wealthy native princes and to exact ever-mounting taxes from the common people. So reckless was the spoliation that by 1789 Governor-General Cornwallis (of American fame) was forced to report that one-third of the company's territory had been reduced to "a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts"; official histories refer to these years as the "infamous" period of British rule.

As industrial capitalism made giant strides in nineteenth century England, as profit-thirsty manufacturers clamored for overseas markets, the more systematic exploitation of India began. Soon India was deluged with cheap British manufactured goods. The heavily taxed Indian spinners, weavers, and other hand workers could not compete; the once prosperous Indian towns decayed and shrank. In 1835 the governor-general admitted that "the bones of the cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India." By the 1850's, however, it became clear that India could not continue as a steady market for British goods if the colony could export nothing in return. Accordingly, Indian agriculture was drafted for the production of raw materials vital to British industry such as cotton, jute, and oilseeds. A system of railroads linking the interior with the coast was built up to facilitate the import of British manufactures into the countryside and the export of the raw materials grown there. As a consequence, by the end of the nineteenth century, India became the largest importer in the world of British goods—a source of vast profits to British traders and manufacturers.

The opening of the twentieth century marked the passage of Great Britain from the stage of industrial capitalism to that of finance capitalism, and with the shift arose its pressing problem of the reinvestment of huge amounts of surplus capital. India now was called on to serve as a place of profitable employment for this British capital, expended chiefly in the purchase of government and municipal bonds, the further construction of railroads, and the establishment of additional plantations growing exportable staples. British banks tightened their control over the colony's financial affairs at great gain to themselves. They supervised the economic relations between India and the rest of the world. As early as 1914 the annual return on those British investments was greater than the yearly profits on the sale to India of British goods. The finance capitalist exploitation of India had become dominant.

R. Palme Dutt

Since the war of 1914-18 India's importance to Britain rose immeasurably, and Dutt goes into the present period at length. British capitalists own $5,000,000,000 in Indian investments, more than twenty-five percent of all British holdings abroad. At least *$700,000,000 in clear profits is taken out of India to swell the annual incomes of Britain's moneylords.* Small wonder then, that German, Japanese, and American imperialists look with greedy eyes at Britain's chief possession.

For the Indian people, the chief result of the extraction of such gigantic profits is an ever-deepening agrarian crisis. As Marx demonstrated, capitalism in its development and expansion creates a huge reserve of jobless workers. Dutt shows how imperialism, in transforming a colonial country into a one-sided producer of raw materials, necessarily gives rise to a vast army of landless agricultural unemployed. In India, the proportion of the population engaged in manufacturing has dropped throughout the past century; consequently, the pressure on the land has been increasing. Under crushing taxes and exorbitant rents, peasant holdings have become progressively smaller and peasant debts progressively larger. Growing numbers have lost their land altogether, becoming propertyless (and largely superfluous) agricultural laborers. *The average gross income of the 250,000,000 Indian peasants is now less than three cents a day.*

In contrast Dutt cites the experience of the Central Asian Republics of the Soviet Union —Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tadjikistan. Under czarist imperialism these agricultural regions were economically comparable to India, while socially far more backward. In two decades of socialism, farming has been collectivized and the latest types of equipment introduced; modern industries appeared, such as electric power works, textile and paper mills, agricultural machinery factories and chemical plants; and sweeping measures for the equality of women, the improvement of public health, and the abolition of illiteracy have been carried through. As opposed to the millions annually drained by Britain from India, the striking advance of the Central Asian Republics has been financed in large part by

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outright grants from the central federal budget of the USSR.

From the history of British imperialism and its inevitable effect upon the lives of the Indian people, Dutt turns to the efforts of the Indian people to make their own history. Even during the half century after the Revolt of 1857 was crushed, sporadic peasant uprisings occurred in various provinces. But before 1914 the movement for national freedom was dominated by the small, moderate, middle class Indian National Congress. The real mass struggle for liberation dates from the sufferings of the Indian people in the war of 1914-18, when they were forced to bear additional burdens of debt and taxation to support British imperialism against its German rival. With peace, with the inspiration of the successful Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent defeat of all attempts to reestablish imperialist control over Soviet Siberia and Central Asia, came a great national upsurge led by workers in industry and transport. For, despite British policy, a few industries had arisen: textile mills, jute mills, coal mines, and one large steel company; and of course various types of laborers were necessary to run the railroads, to load and man the ships.

In the cities these workers struck for higher wages and demonstrated, along with the petty bourgeoisie, against British rule. Peasants in the villages protested against high land rents, interest rates, and taxes. The British replied with sweeping civil repression. Alarmed at the growing force of the workers and peasants, the bourgeois leaders of the Indian National Congress determined to gain control of the popular movement. Utilizing the "spiritual" figure of Gandhi, the 1920 congress called for a nation-wide home rule campaign in the form of non-violent non-cooperation with the British authority. To this call the Indian masses responded in overwhelming numbers, undeterred by arrests, shootings and bombings. Suddenly, early in 1922, Gandhi called off the entire campaign, complaining that the masses were not sufficiently "non-violent."

The most subtle and experienced politician of the Indian bourgeoisie, Gandhi feared lest the mass movement sweep forward to complete victory, destroying Indian capitalism and landlordism along with British imperialism. The nature of the violence he dreaded is shown by the item given greatest prominence in the official congress resolution ending the campaign: a demand that the peasantry resume immediately the payment of rents due landlords and taxes due the government.

Gandhi's 1922 desertion stunned and disorganized the national movement. But only temporarily. Dutt brilliantly illuminates how within a few years the industrial working class emerged as an independent force and, under Communist leadership, waged and won the greatest series of strikes in Indian history. Simultaneously, socialist ideas spread rapidly among the workers, and among the students and youth generally. The government, alarmed at the rising wave of working class activity, arrested the chief labor leaders on

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grounds of sedition early in 1929, and, after the scandalous four-year-long Meerut Trial, sent them to prison with savage sentences.

But no government action could check the rising discontent among the workers, the petty bourgeoisie, and the peasantry, particularly after the world economic crisis of 1929. Immediately, the Indian National Congress turned again to Gandhi for leadership, and began the second civil disobedience campaign with the announced goal of full independence. Once again the tremendous mass response far exceeded the limited program outlined by Gandhi. In several key cities the people took over the government; in the countryside peasants refused to pay rent or taxes. Everywhere British authority was spurned and British goods boycotted. British terror only spurred the people to greater self-sacrifice and stronger determination. As in 1922 Gandhi and the Indian bourgeoisie became alarmed lest the movement pass out of their control. For the second time this "general of unbroken disaster" succeeded where the British had failed. He confused and defeated the popular struggle by creating delays and diverting attention to side issues, until in 1934 the movement had to be called off.

Although halted in each case before the goal was reached, the two mass civil disobedience campaigns were not in vain. They served to arouse a greater national unity, a stronger self-confidence, and a deeper political understanding, all of which have been ripening in the more recent period. Dutt shows that long before the great awakening of the Indian people, far-seeing British imperialists realized that Britain could keep India permanently in subjection only by finding or creating allies *among the Indian population*. In those franker days, an important official like the governor of Bombay could say (in 1859): *"Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours." Chief of these allies since that time has been the 500-odd Native Princes who rule in name over one-third of India's extent—ridiculous remnants of an older order who would have disappeared long since, had not British power propped them up to form "a vast network of friendly fortresses in a debatable territory." In this century the British also sought by special favors to win the support of the Moslems (about twenty percent of the population), and to develop "communal" conflict between them and the Hindus (seventy percent of the population) in order to divert the energies of both from the common national struggle. But the so-called "communal organizations" (actually small landlord and banker-dominated groups pursuing in practice an identical policy of reaction on all social and economic issues), have been repudiated repeatedly and overwhelmingly by the mass of the Indian people, both Hindu and Moslem.

The Indian National Congress, since 1934, has reorganized; its membership of five million represents all classes. The working class as an independent force has grown greatly in terms of trade union membership and Marxist

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leadership. The peasants have formed their own militant nationwide organization with more than a million members and incalculably vast influence. When war broke out in 1939 the congress condemned it as "imperialistic" and refused support to the empire. Since then thousands of the most devoted and advanced leaders—trade unionists, peasant organizers, students, militant congress officials—have been jailed for conducting strikes and struggles against rising living costs, for protesting against involvement of India in the war; for raising the demand that the congress undertake a new mass campaign for independence. The bourgeois elements dominant in the congress still temporize, still refuse to call for what might well be a successful struggle against British rule.

The confidence with which Dutt proclaims the ultimate triumph of the Indian people is the measure not only of his Marxist insight, but also of his twenty-five years of experience in fighting against British capitalism and imperialism, and of his deep love for India, among whose sons he is proud to rank himself. Impregnated with the force and vigor of a great nation about to burst its bonds, *India To-day* heralds a new stage in the struggles of the colonial peoples for liberation.

BRADLEY ROGERS.

Mr. Dutt's book has as yet not been published in this country. An extensive summary by T. A. Bisson appeared in "Amerasia" for November and December 1940.

Brief Review

EQUAL JUSTICE: THE BILL OF RIGHTS, 1939-41. *Published Quarterly by the International Labor Defense. 5 cents.*

"Equal Justice" gives heartening testimony to the strength of the people whenever that strength is organized and exerted. In case after case, no matter how dark the outlook at the start, *the people won.* The section on "Defense Victories," with its significant subtitle, "won by the united mass effort mobilized by the International Labor Defense," lists the cases of John Williams, Warren K. Billings, and Kim Young, the victories over Hearst in Chicago and the FBI in Detroit, the turning back of lawlessness in Illinois, Iowa, Georgia, California. A triumphant finis can now be written to two more cases since this little book was published—the Wheeler case in West Virginia, and the attempted frame-up against Adolph Heller and Bernard Rush of the Philadelphia Workers School.

There are illuminating sections in this report on reactionary legislation, pending and placed on the statute books within the last few months. Most welcome are the excerpts from Congressman Vito Marcantonio's speeches, not the least of whose contribution is his service as president of the ILD. What stands out from these sections and indeed from the entire content of the book, is the close relationship between civil liberties and the current historical and political scene.

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MONOPOLY TAKES A SCREEN TEST

Joy Davidman looks into the TNEC findings on the movie industry. The villain of the piece. Eight "cooperating" film companies run the works. What the monograph did not say.

THERE is a story told in Hollywood about a lion. Leo, poor beast, had grown old in the service of a certain film company. His duty was to appear on the screen at the beginning of each picture, open his mouth, and emit an impressive roar. For ten years he had never failed to roar perfectly.

"You are one of our most valued employees," said the studio's Big Executive to Leo one day. "We would like to make you happy. What can we do for you, Leo, within reason?"

"Well," the lion confessed shyly, "I always wanted to know what that Latin motto means. You know, the one that appears on the screen with me."

"That?" said the Executive, betraying a pardonable embarrassment; "that, why, that, Leo, means Art for Art's Sake."

Well, they finally had to retire poor Leo. It seems that ever afterward, when he appeared on the screen, the lion opened his mouth and emitted a horse laugh.

The history of the horse laugh is only a symbolic way of expressing a great truth about the movie industry. One of the main branches of American communication, it exerts unbelievable influence upon the American mind. Our public education, as any schoolteacher can tell you, is almost powerless against the standards of speech and behavior taught by, for instance, George Raft. Our students learn history and geography from Don Ameche and Dottie Lamour. With the radio and the newspaper, the screen forms a triumvirate to rule adult opinion on social or political issues. In these activities the movie industry is guided, as ever, by its lofty Latin motto: *Pecunia Non Olet,* or freely translated, Money Smells Nice.

The Temporary National Economic Committee in its investigation of the film monopoly, has turned up a good many smells that are not so nice. In a monograph politely named "The Motion Picture Industry—A Pattern of Control," the TNEC analyzes Hollywood's stranglehold on our entertainment. What TNEC calls "the pattern" embraces the production, distribution, and exhibition of films, three activities which are today controlled almost entirely by a single group composed of eight "cooperating" film companies. These are Paramount, Loew's, Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner, RKO, Columbia, Universal and United Artists; they produce seventy percent of all films (ninety-five percent of important films), own outright the distributors of all these films, own a quarter of the seating space in United States theaters (including the majority of first-run houses in important cities), and also hold independent exhibitors entirely at their mercy.

When the motion picture industry struggled up from its nickelodeon days, there was a good deal of free competition in it. It didn't take producers long, however, to realize the advantages of owning chains of theaters in squeezing their rivals out. With control of outlets for films, control of production was assured. "By the early twenties, most of the important independent corporations and individuals were eliminated or submerged. The industry had already passed from one of many small independent companies to one controlled by a few relatively powerful organizations." (Quotations are from the TNEC monograph.) The development of large companies, however, necessitated large capital backing, and the real control of the film industry passed to the hands of the same people who run the rest of American industry. "Financial dependence on Wall Street increased enormously." It is a point to be borne in mind.

"When a few dominating elements finally achieve substantial control of an industry," says TNEC, "they usually proceed to adopt and perfect methods which will insure retention of that control." The movie moguls have been most ingenious in perfecting their methods. The "pattern" now includes block booking and blind selling, by which the companies dictate what you will see; clearance and zoning, dictating when and where you will see it; price-fixing, which hardly needs translation; and the activity of the Hays organization, whose function is to sweep the dirt under the bed. There are also practices peculiar to the exhibition side of the industry, such as selective contracts and overbuying, by which a large exhibitor may tie up all the worthwhile films so as to squeeze out his small competitors. The Loew's and RKO chains in New York, for example, are sure to play most films long before you can get a look at them at an independent theater.

BLOCK BOOKING is perhaps the most interesting of these little devices. It consists of selling a company's entire scheduled product for the year in a lump—sight unseen, of course—so that an exhibitor, to get films he wants, must take a good many films he doesn't want. Another pretty affair is the Hays office, "an illuminating example of the cooperation of large business units for self-protection. . . . It is supported exclusively by the large companies. It was conceived in fear of regulation of the industry by the public and dedicated to the proposition that outsiders should never dictate its policies." In addition to telling producers how much dirt they can get away with, the Hays organization censors advertising, provides legal advice, negotiates foreign contracts, and, above all, "assists trade associations of theater owners in developing in constructive ways their own usefulness and service to the local theater owners in their own state and zone. . . ." This is a pretty way of expressing the film equivalent of California's bank-dominated Associated Farmers.

All these organizations and practices may seem rather remote to Joe Smith, as he reads unexplained references to them in his evening paper. But Joe finishes the paper, helps Jennie dry the dishes, and says, "How about taking in a movie tonight?"

So Joe and Jennie trot off to the Neighborhood Playhouse.

Some time before this, in Hollywood, two pictures have been produced for them to see. *Whirlwinds of Desire,* with a "name" cast, a competent director, and an expensive production, was considered an A picture; this meant that it would receive a good deal of advertising, and, presumably, be a box-office draw. *Desire's Whirlwind,* on the other hand, was a stepchild from the beginning, designed to fill second place on the double-feature bill, and nobody expected it to attract the public at all. Under the block-booking system, however, the exhibitor had to sign for it in advance to get anything.

When it arrived he looked at it and was appalled. "I should like to exercise my cancellation privilege," he wrote to QED Pictures. "I do not want to play this turkey."

"You should not cancel this film; it is good box-office," QED wrote back. "We advise you to play it. Besides, you can't cancel one film until you've paid for ten others. Besides, you've haven't notified us in time. Also, if you cancel this film you will have to take another which, we tell you candidly, is even worse." (Well, perhaps they didn't put it quite like that.)

So the exhibitor decided to cut his losses; as he'd have to pay for *Desire's Whirlwind* in any case, he'll bill it together with *Whirlwinds of Desire* and pass the loss on to Joe Smith. *Whirlwinds of Desire* cost a lot to make, had seven and a half clever lines, but owes most of its interest, to the high-grade legs of Sandra Scarlett and the manly beauty of Drake Dribble. *Desire's Whirlwind* cost very little to make (i.e. a couple of hundred thousand), has one-half a clever line, and owes its problematical interest to the second-grade legs of Sylvia Blonde and the not-so-manly beauty of Brett Pompadour. Joe and Jennie

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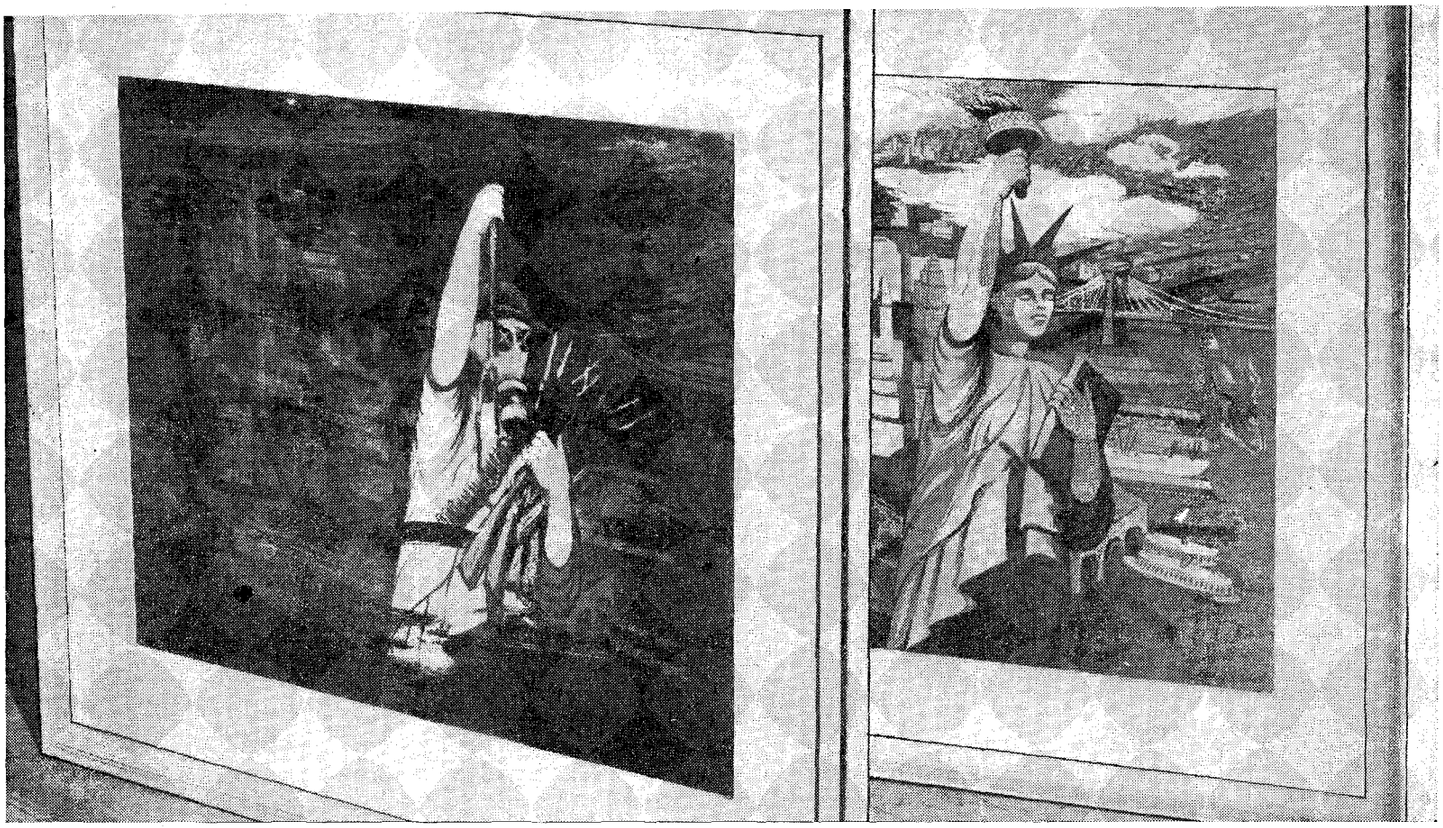

BLACKOUT. *A two-print-silk-screen-folio by Harry Gottlieb from the recent Artists Congress exhibition.*

go home very disappointed because they have failed to win anything in the Screeno game.

"I dunno," says Joe, "the movies don't seem to give me a kick any more."

This is supposed to be giving the public what it wants. Actually, the public doesn't want it, as is proved by the tremendous drop in receipts in late years (in spite of Screeno). The exhibitor certainly doesn't want it, if the squawks he sends to the trade papers are any indication. The eight big producing companies and their Wall Street backers (such as Chase National) do, however, want it very much. The "pattern" still pays fat profits, and makes it unnecessary to use too many brains in the production end of the business. "The integration in the motion picture industry is complete, from the inception of an idea for a picture through to the actual exhibition of the film. The importance of the integration of production, distribution, and exhibition lies in the accomplishment, not of more closely knit operation but of virtual elimination of competition." In other words, Joe and Jennie, the film industry is a branch of capitalist monopoly. Monopoly's goods may be inferior, but it can say to you: take this or nothing. And since entertainment is a fundamental human need, Joe, you and Jennie often take it.

Nevertheless, box-office is not what it used to be. The howls of the exhibitors, wounded where it hurts most, have inspired a certain amount of government action against the monopoly: an anti-trust prosecution, hastily settled out of court by a "consent decree." This document attempts to solve the problems of the industry by cutting block-booking to blocks of five films—for one year. The companies can abandon this restriction if they feel it pains them too much.

The authors of the TNEC monograph frankly admit they can find no really adequate way out of the mess.

> Any remedy or solution to the problems of the motion picture industry in its relations with the consuming public will not be a simple one. It is a mistake to assume that any . . . single proposal will resolve all the difficulties of all the elements with an interest in this industry. . . . The motion picture industry exhibits symptoms which are common to many of our great enterprises. Its problems are part of the larger problem of the development and direction of American industry. More than anything else, perhaps, intelligent and sympathetic study is indicated."

There is a certain weak-kneed truth in this. You cannot break the film monopoly, any more than you can destroy race hatred or malnutrition or war, without "solving the problem" of capitalist monopoly. Barred by its nature and function from indicating the genuine way out, TNEC brings up sharply against a blank wall. Hence such self-stultification as the suggestion of restraining monopoly with "sympathetic study."

Other omissions mar this report. Content to sketch the film industry's relation to the consumer, TNEC has entirely forgotten the industry's relation to its own workers. Yet this is the major problem of all industry today, and Hollywood in its lunatic way is as much a company town as Weirton. Deep down, under the debutantes and the slick agents and the gross producers, lies a buried stratum of overworked and underpaid labor that really makes the industry go. There are the writers, some of them making fabulous salaries for little or no work, but many of them the hard-fighting union men who organized the Screen Writers Guild in the teeth of company opposition and who make the Hollywood branch of the League of American Writers a vigorous progressive organization. There are the actors, bit players, and extras, most of whom get a pitiful few days of work a year, for which they often have to kick back part of their salaries. There is the army of technicians: sound men, electricians, camera crews, the "grips"—harried and driven, continually being fired in "economy" waves. There are the waitresses in the studio commissary, working at $12 a week or so, the first victims of the economy wave which never seems to reach $3000-a-week producers who haven't produced anything in five years. There is George, who takes care of the lion cub, and Al, who runs errands, and Lowell, who's a clerk in the research department. Another and finer TNEC report might be written about these people; it is they who will solve the problem of the film monopoly.

And a report might be written on the product itself. TNEC hints that the great banks control our films, but says nothing about how that control is used. Put in plain words, the function of capitalist films is to lie to the people. Joe and Jennie Smith are to be lulled, by soft music and high-grade legs, into accepting every horror that the monopolists have in store for them. At the moment the horror on the menu is war; so your evening's "entertainment" is a compact dose of war propaganda. Comedians adjure you to buy defense bonds; romantic heroes, fluttering their eye-

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lashes, urge you to die for the British empire. The movie industry, with its brothers in monopoly, has its own program for solving industrial problems; a program that will brush TNEC's good intentions aside like straw. It is up to the Smiths to find the solution TNEC fears to face and get themselves honest films honestly presented—as well as peace and bread and all the other human decencies.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Jitterbugs and Thrills

"Sunny" lacks Gargantua; Fritz Lang's "Man Hunt."

I, PERHAPS, am not the ideal reviewer for films like Sunny. I don't like fancy clothes, and I don't like fancy dancing. I don't like swing music. I detest young men with neatly barbered mustaches and gurgling tenor voices. Also, the original stage version of *Sunny* is a memory from the bright days of my childhood. It was the very first real theater show I was taken to, and it bored me even then.

So it is possible that I will not be quite fair to the screen version of *Sunny*. Very well; get yourself a nice innocent reviewer from a big newspaper. Let him be one who believes that the art of the camera consists of photographing a cutie through veils of lace. Let him be a jitterbug who jitters even before breakfast. Give him a hopeless passion for Anna Neagle and take him to *Sunny*, and I will bet my best hat that he will be just as bored as I was.

This incredible musical dribbles like an advanced case of paresis. Its first section takes place in New Orleans at carnival time, and for a solid half hour the screen is one mad tangle of confetti and circus performers. Except that Sunny kisses a man, nothing happens. The middle section takes place in a swanky mansion, but do not relax too soon; the circus arrives and goes into its tenth-rate acts in the middle of the grand ballroom. The last section takes place in a circus. There is no Gargantua, but John Carroll sings.

With most bad films, you can analyze the plot and say why it's silly. With *Sunny*, this pleasure is denied you. There is no plot. Except for a trained seal, there are no actors. There are no laughs either, and the wistful and charming tunes of the original score have been buried under squalling trumpets. To offset these trivial lacks, the film offers you much indeed. There are some simply stunning gowns.

It is not the fault of Frieda Inescort and Helen Westley that they have been entombed in confetti. Both have been adroit performers in the past, and doubtless will be again. It is not the fault of Miss Neagle, who used to do Shakespeare delightfully in her English pictures, that Hollywood lets her do nothing except sing in her thin pipe and kiss, alternately, John Carroll and a white horse. The rest of the cast, however, is equal to its material. Even the attenuated legs of Ray Bolger lack their usual interest; Mr. Bolger's chief

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GOINGS ON

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attraction is his ability to look like an idiot, and in *Sunny* that's nothing unusual.

"MAN HUNT" is dedicated to the proposition that assassination is an honorable and effective way of solving political problems. All we have to do, the film indicates, is to shoot der Adolph with a high-powered rifle, and there will be cakes and ale for everybody. This might be called the devil theory of history, and is akin to a belief in magic. According to *Man Hunt,* the world's at war because Adolph's a nasty man. It is not surprising to hear this from Hollywood, when we are hearing it continually from our newspapers, our statesmen, and other great minds. The trouble with this somewhat naive approach to sociology and economics is that its supporters are always disappointed; when they do kill their devil, there's always another nasty man to take his place.

In *Man Hunt,* such practical considerations trouble nobody. Its hero is a great humanitarian who has spent his life killing animals for sport, until, having reached satiety, he yearns for a more exciting victim. About to pot Hitler with an elephant gun, he is nabbed by the annoyed Nazi police, who beat him up to the accompaniment of offscreen groans and thuds. Enter, then, the sleek and smiling George Sanders as head of the Gestapo. Will our hero sign a statement that the English government has commanded his attempted murder? Never! (The orchestra plays *Rule Britannia* softly.) All right, give him the works, boys, says Mr. Sanders in impeccable German.

The works include shoving our hero off a ninety-foot cliff—and here the film forgets its weird sociology and turns into a little thriller. There are, regrettably, the usual scenes of escape through the dismal swamp, one inch ahead of the bloodhounds. But the cabin boy who hides the fugitive, the girl of the streets who allies herself with him, and John Carradine's pursuit of him with a sword-cane through the London subway, provide some brilliantly handled terrors. In an ingenious climax, Mr. Sanders meets a sticky end with true poetic justice, and Walter Pidgeon, the humanitarian hero, is free to go back to Germany with another high-powered rifle.

Fritz Lang's direction makes the most of the story's excitement. What he has done with Joan Bennett is particularly astonishing; usually an inert creature, she becomes vivid and appealing as the Cockney girl. The scene in which she appals the hero's icebound sister-in-law is perhaps the best. Another pleasant thing about the film is the opportunity it gives Walter Pidgeon, who has been identified with Nick Carter too long. He makes Captain Alan Thorndyke human. Other actors are equally competent, especially Mr. Sanders, who plays a Nazi brute with a perfect English upper-class manner; that must be why he's so convincing. As an incitement to assassination, *Man Hunt* remains a rather disgusting evidence of war hysteria. J. D.

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